THE

LITERARY AND FASHIONABLE

MAGAZINE,

FOR NOVEMBER, 1808.

BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCHES OF ILLUSTRIOUS MEN.

The Twenty-Eighth Number.

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AMONG the illustrious characters who have conferred distinction on our age and nation, there is, perhaps, no one who has more strongly interested the attention of his cotemporaries, or who will more powerfully excite the curiosity of posterity, than Richard Brinsley Sheridan. The versatility not less than the greatness of his talents, has contributed to render him a general theme of conversation; and there is scarcely a class of society into whose discussions the name of Sheridan is not frequently and appropriately introduced. His eloquence in the House of Commons, the great field for the acquisition of political eminence, has long placed him in the foremost rank of statesmen; and, so skilfully has he managed his oratorical appearances, there are few popular questions with which the applauses of his exertions are not associated. His dramatic works, and some poetical pieces, have procured him such an enviable reputation for genius and taste, that every new production from his pen is eagerly caught up by the public, as an object not to be criticised, but admired. Nor have his talents in the private intercourse of life, acquired him less distinction among the votaries of fashion and dissipation. His wit, his gaiety, his address, his taste in elegant amusements, and the ornamental arts: his powers of conversation, which have given zest to the feast and flavour to the wine, have rendered his presence the desire and the delight of every brilliant circle. Of a man of such various and celebrated accomplishments, a biographical account, if written with truth, and with any portion of spirit, cannot fail to be acceptable to all ranks of the community.

Mr. Sheridan may be said to possess an hereditary claim to considerable distinction in the republic of letters. His grandfather, the Rev. Dr. Thomas Sheridan, who acquired as much celebrity in Ireland by his skill in the instruction of youth, as Dr. Busby did in England, was the intimate friend, and frequent companion, of Dr. Swift.

Dr. Sheridan, who possessed infinite good-nature, readily entered into the humours of his illustrious friend, and shewed his devotion to the Dean's favourite maxim of *vive la bagatelle*, by many occasional drolleries in prose and verse. Stella was often a welcome visitor, during the summer months, at his residence at Cavan; and Swift found himself quite at home, where no one quarrelled with his raillery, or put any restraint upon his singular habits. Some little heart-burnings occasionally interrupted the usual harmony. Swift set no bounds to his raillery; and Sheridan whose good-nature was incapable of being ruffled, at times retaliated with more effect than the irritable

Dean could well endure. Sheridan wrote a ludicrous elegy on Swift's Muse, with a description of her death and interment; and Swift, in return, wrote the history of the presumptuous poet, under the title of the *Second Solomon*. Yet their friendship continued sincere and cordial till the death of Dr. Sheridan; and the specimens of his talents, which are interspersed in the collection of Swift's writings, bear ample testimony to his wit and learning.

Thomas Sheridan, his only son, and father of the subject of this memoir, was sent over to Westminster school, where he was, though a mere stranger, by pure merit elected a king's scholar. His rising abilities were, however, much obstructed by his father's poverty; for it was a characteristic of Dr. Sheridan, that, though he made considerable sums of money, he was utterly incapable of saving any. The foundation of the king's scholars at Westminster fell at that period about fourteen pounds short of their maintenance; and because his father could not advance that small sum, he was recalled to Dublin, though in another year he would have been entitled to a fellowship in Oxford or Cambridge. By the interest of some friends he procured an exhibition in the University of Dublin; but was soon called upon to provide for his subsistance by the exertion of his talents. The lines which he chose were those of an actor and a teacher of elocution. In the former he was respectable, and for the latter he was eminently qualified. It is said that his attention was first directed towards elocution by Dr. Swift, to whom, in his younger days, he frequently read, and from whom he heard many delicate criticisms, both on the structure and the pronunciation of our language. His labours to improve the system of education, to ameliorate our national elocution, and to fix a standard of pronunciation, acquired him deserved celebrity; and the volumes he published relative to these subjects, still maintain their reputation. He gave other proofs of literary talents, by adapting some plays for representation, and by a life of Dr. Swift, in which however his admiration of that great man indured him to become rather a strenuous advocate than an impartial biographer.

His wife, whose domestic qualities are represented as exemplary, gave indications of equal genius with her husband. She was the authoress of *Nourjahad*, an Oriental Tale; and of three comedies, *The Discovery*, *The Dupe*, and *The Trip to Bath*. Her most finished performance, *Sidney Biddulph*, continues to be reprinted among our popular novels, and to be admired for its interest and morality.

Descended from these parents, Richard Brinsley Sheridan was born in Dublin, in October, 1751. His mother anxiously laboured during his infant years, to imprint upon his mind the rudiments of learning; but her efforts were fruitless, for her son was destined to afford an example of talents which blossom so late as to have been despaired of, and yet bear a produce exceeding the most promising and early flowers. When he was transferred, in his seventh year, to the care of Mr. Whyte, who had newly established an academy in Dublin, his mother could not help expressing her chagrin at the invincible dulness which she had encountered in him and his elder brother Charles. In a letter to their teacher, she feelingly assured him, that *patience* was the most requisite qualification for his new employment—"These "boys," said she, "will be your tutors in that "virtue; I have hitherto been their only in- "structor, and they have sufficiently exercised "mine; for two such impenetrable dunces I "never met with."

After eighteen months, they quitted Mr. Whyte, with the same reputation as they had brought to school; and the succeeding year was spent at home, in attendance on their father's public recitations and in reading under the superintendance of their mother.

In his eleventh year, Richard Brinsley was placed at Harrow school; and here it was first discovered, that the extreme tardiness of his progress proceeded rather from indolence than the want of powers. When he saw himself placed amidst a croud of rivals; when he perceived that applause and distinction would crown his successful exertions, while his idleness and ignorance would be punished with derision and contempt; it was found that he could rouse himself to strennous industry, and readily bear away the palm from his competitors. But such efforts could be called forth only by certain occasions, where particular applause was to be acquired; and at his departure from Harrow, he was looked upon as a youth capable of any attainment if he could endure the labour of acquisition.

He had been destined for a learned profession; but the limited state of his father's income, which at that time consisted principally of a yearly pension of 200*l.* from the Crown, precluded the completion of his education at one of the Universities. On leaving Harrow, he was entered a student in the Middle Temple, where, under the appearance of preparing

himself for a lucrative profession, he privately employed himself in drawing supplies for his subsistence from the exertion of his literary talents. His writings, however, were wholly anonymous, and confined to the periodical publications of the day: for his knowledge, which did not as yet exceed a general acquaintance with the *Belles Lettres*, could scarcely have furnished materials for a volume to which he might have affixed his name, even if his industry could have undertaken so formidable a task. He is said to have attempted comedy; but his acquaintance with life and manners was then too limited.

From these obscure and irregular efforts, where indolence hardly yielded to necessity, Sheridan was roused by a passion which filled his breast. Miss Linley the daughter of a distinguished musical composer, began, about this time, to be celebrated as the most fascinating vocal performer of her age. Her voice was peculiarly melodious; and the feeling with which her notes were uttered gave them an effect surpassing the most finished efforts of art. The admiration excited by her vocal powers was heightened by the beauty of her person, and the modest, yet elegant, simplicity which pervaded her behaviour. Her charms were the general theme of conversation; and, from her public situation, she was followed by crowds of professed admirers. Among the rest, Sheridan urged his suit with particular ardour: his heart was captivated by her beauty, and his vanity inflamed by the hope of triumphing over so many rivals. But the situation of a man who barely provided himself with the means of subsistence, presented no prospect which could engage the favour of any prudent parent: and whatever impression Sheridan might have made on the heart of Miss Linley, her father decidedly opposed his addresses.

A fortunate incident at length enabled the lover to render his mistress a service so agreeable that parental authority could no longer controul the impulses of gratitude. The blameless conduct of Miss Linley was insufficient to exempt her from those imputations which never fail to pursue the fair and beautiful, who exhibit themselves on a public stage; and Mr. Matthews, one of the distinguished votaries of fashion at Bath, had the audacity to insert in a public paper a paragraph reflecting on her character. On learning this insult, Sheridan, who had followed his fair mistress to that place, was transported with indignation. He hastened to the printer, and finding that Matthews was the author, and was already departed for London, he immediately followed, resolved to procure instant satisfaction for the outrage. He found him at a tavern in the neighbourhood of Covent Garden; and a duel on the spot was the consequence of their meeting. They fought with swords; till Sheridan, having disarmed his adversary, compelled him to sign a retractation of the defamatory paragraph, with which he returned in triumph to Bath.

Determined that the atonement should be as public as the insult, Sheridan inserted the retractation in the same paper in which the obnoxious paragraph had appeared. Matthews, who had not expected this exposure of his defeat and confession, was enraged beyond measure; and, hastening to Bath, in his turn called on Sheridan for satisfaction. Their second contest, which was also conducted with swords, after one discharge of pistols, was fought with the utmost desperation. After both parties were wounded, and had closed and fallen, they continued to fight on the ground until they were separated by their seconds. Sheridan received several wounds, and a part of his antagonist's sword was left in his ear.

These chivalrous exploits in defence of her reputation, formed an irresistable claim to Miss Linley's heart; and, to escape effectually from the restraints of parental opposition, she consented to accompany her lover to the Continent. On their return, Mr. Linley was prevailed upon to sanction an union which it was no longer in his power to prevent; and the young couple were again married, according to the rites of the Church of England.

Sheridan now found himself possessed of the dearest object of his wishes, but destitute of almost every other worldly comfort. The scanty pecuniary supplies which he could collect had been exhausted in his excursion; and, when he took lodgings for his family in Orchard-street, he had not provided any resources for their subsistence. Their maintenance was for some time derived almost wholly from that credit which tradesmen are willing to allow; and it is said, that the morning frequently found them without provision to meet the necessities of the day. The relief which Sheridan derived from the casual effusions of his pen, was scanty and precarious. It is even said, but we hope unjustly, that he affected to despise the practice of writing for subsistence, the means by which his necessities had hitherto been relieved; and that he spoke of an independence procured by this honourable species of industry as more degrading than the miserable dependence of a debtor. Such sentiments, if uttered by him,

were evidently the dictates of indolence, to which the toil of writing appeared too dreadful a sacrifice even for independence.

The vocal talents of Mrs. Sheridan formed another resource from which he might have derived an immediate competency; but stung, perhaps, by the silly sarcasms he had encountered as the son of a player, he considered a public appearance before an audience, as a degradation to which he could by no means allow his wife to submit. The Pantheon was about to be opened; and the proprietors, anxious to allure the public by a display of the most celebrated vocal performers, offered Mrs. Sheridan a thousand pounds for her performance during twelve nights, with a benefit which insured an equal amount. Two thousand pounds must have offered great temptation to him in want of daily means of subsistence; and Mrs. Sheridan, whose sensibility was deeply affected by their irksome situation, earnestly entreated permission to relieve their embarrassments; but Sheridan, considering his honour engaged in his refusal, rejected the proposition with indignation.

Sentiments so lofty were not to be supported without some immediate and vigorous exertion of his own talents. His acquaintance with life had now been considerably extended by an intercourse of some years with the societies of London and Bath; and he was forcibly led towards dramatic writing, both by the bent of his genius and by the lucrative prospects which it presented. His first comedy, *The Rivals*, was finished with an industry and celerity to which he had hitherto been unaccustomed; and, from his connections with the theatre, it was immediately received, and represented at Covent Garden, in January, 1775. As the production of a young man in his twenty-fifth year, this comedy was regarded as a masterly performance; though it is not superior to the *Old Batchelor*, which Congreve brought forward before the age of twenty.

The Rivals, read or acted, seldom fails to yield much amusement: yet the characters are evidently rather formed from the fancy of the poet, than drawn from an intimate knowledge of life; and we are engaged and entertained rather by humourous burlesque and caricature, than by genuine wit and nature. The sickly sensibility of *Faulkland*, the national oddity of *Sir Lucius O'Trigger*, and the unconscious absurdity of *Acres*, though generally extremely risible, are in several passages so forced and excessive, that the reader cannot but be reminded of the poet's eager desire to be humourous. The grammatical blunders of *Mrs. Malaprop* are, in several instances, neither ingenious nor probable; and the romance of *Lydia Languish*, is certainly carried beyond the whimsies of the most love-sick Miss at boarding-school. These imperfections, however, are chiefly perceptible in the closet, and very little affect the representation. The observation of Moliere, *il faut des gros traits pour frapper la publique*, has been justified by repeated experience; and we can scarcely doubt that the unpropitious reception of *The Rivals*, on its first representation, was justly ascribed to the negligence of some of the actors. Sheridan, chagrined, but not disheartened by this disappointment, withdrew the piece; and having improved several scenes, and thrown additional vigour into the language, he again brought it forward, with the support of other actors, and had the satisfaction to see it received with the most flattering approbation.

The success of *The Rivals* afforded him immediate relief from pecuniary embarrassments; and laid the foundation of a fame, which would have facilitated all his future exertions. Towards the close of the same season, he rewarded Mr. Clinch for his excellent performance of *Sir Lucius O'Trigger*, which had previously failed in the hands of Lee, by presenting him the farce of *St. Patrick's Day, or the Scheming Lieutenant*, which was brought forward at that actor's benefit, and greatly amused the galleries by its broad humour. It is said to have cost the author only the labour of eight-and-forty hours; and, indeed, there was nothing perceptible in the piece which seemed to demand a longer exertion.

Early in the next winter he produced the comic opera of *The Duenna*, whose success rendered its theatrical merits indisputable. *The Beggar's Opera*, which exceeded all previous pieces in the duration of its popularity, had a run of sixty-five nights; but Sheridan had the gratification to see his *Duenna* represented seventy-five nights during the same season! As a literary production *The Duenna* does not deserve particular attention from the critic. It is, however, far superior to those mere vehicles for song, with which the stage has, for the last half century, been degraded; for it is capable of being rendered very entertaining by good acting, a quality to which few of our modern English operas can pretend. Even in the closet it possesses some attractions. Several of the songs are animated, and the dialogue generally possesses an amusing quaintness.

While this success began to make him taste the enjoyment of more easy circumstances, a

prospect opened of attaining independence and wealth far more easily and speedily, by uniting the management of a theatre with the usual pursuits of a dramatic writer. In conjunction with Dr. Ford, and his father-in-law, Mr. Linley, he now purchased from Mr. Garrick, who began to find retirement desirable, the share which that great actor possessed in the patent of Drury Lane. The price, which amounted to thirty thousand pounds, might seem beyond Mr. Sheridan's means; but, in these transactions, payments are made either by annuities or by moderate instalments. In a short time afterwards, he also purchased Mr. Lacy's share in the patent, at a price of nearly equal amount; and he was now possessed of a property, which his own genius might have raised to an enormous value.

He seemed, indeed, sensible how much his interest might be promoted by his dramatic exertions; for he signalized the first season of his management, 1776-7, by a new effort of his pen. He altered Vanbrugh's comedy of *The Relapse*, adapting it to the modern taste, and giving it the new title of *A Trip to Scarborough*. But though the alterations were approved at the theatre, it was represented, on the first night, in such an imperfect manner as to be received with little approbation; yet, when these defects were remedied, it continued to be favourably received by the public.

Before the close of the same season, such puny efforts of his muse were entirely thrown into shade, by the appearance of *The School for Scandal*, in which he gave indisputable proofs of a comic genius of the highest class. The success of this piece, both on the stage and in the closet, could not have been exceeded by the author's most sanguine expectations. From the time of its appearance, he has been considered as the first dramatic genius of his age; and, both on the Continent and at home, his taste and wit have been the theme, not of dispute, but of admiration.

The School for Scandal deserves much of the applause with which it has been crowned. It presents us with just and striking pictures of general nature, modified only by the state of society, and free from those local peculiarities which form the principal attraction of most of our comedies. It has often been remarked, that our comic productions, however entertaining to our own countrymen, are neither relished nor understood by other nations; since they present modifications of character known only among ourselves, and a species of humour only relished from the peculiarity of our national taste. But *The School for Scandal* will please in any polished nation, at Paris as at London; and the lapse of centuries can scarcely produce any change of manners which should render its characters obsolete and unknown.

While, however, the dramatic merits of this comedy have been almost universally allowed, its morality has been severely arraigned. If, as critics pretend, the only legitimate object of comedy is to inculcate some moral lesson, and to represent characters and incidents, not as they are, but as they should be, then certainly *The School for Scandal* is highly reprehensible. Nothing can be a greater outrage on dramatic propriety than to reward the gay libertine *Charles*, with a handsome girl and a large fortune; or to make *Sir Oliver* distribute his wealth according to his capricious feelings, without once consulting his judgment. But if, on the other hand, the design of comedy be to entertain mankind with genuine delineations of nature, and to represent manners and incidents as they are actually found, *The School for Scandal* stands absolved; and those parts, most censured by the fastidious moralist, will be most approved by the candid critic. The rewards and punishments are distributed just as we every day find them in real life: and the irresistible tickling of self love, which at once effaces all *Charles's* faults from the recollection of *Sir Oliver*, presents one of the finest strokes of nature that ever entered into the fancy of a poet.

The author of *The School for Scandal*, has also been accused of plagiarism; and *Joseph* and *Charles* are spoken of as copies of *Blifil* and *Tom Jones*. It is true, that both the novel and the comedy present two brothers, of whom one is a hypocrite and the other a libertine; but the hypocrisy of *Blifil* is very different from that of *Joseph*, and still more different is the libertinism of *Tom Jones* from that of *Charles*. *Tom Jones* is an inexperienced youth, full of warm passions, and led astray by every woman he meets; *Charles* is a gay dissipated youth of fashion, little moved by passion, but entirely devoted to the gaiety of his convivial companions, among whom he loses every reflection on the past, and every care of futurity. The novelist may have suggested some hints to the poet; but the charge of plagiarism deserves little notice.

The School for Scandal was written entirely with a view to representation; and it is on the stage that it appears to the highest advantage, though it also imparts pleasure in the closet. The author himself is said to have been mistrustful of its literary merits; and such is the reason alleged for his never having given an authorised edition of it to the public.

The praises which were showered upon *the School for Scandal*, instead of rousing, seemed to satisfy Mr. Sheridan's desire for dramatic fame; and his succeeding languid efforts appear to indicate, that he accounted it enough to have written one good comedy in the course of his life. The succeeding season, however, produced *the Camp*, a farce intended to excite much merriment in the galleries, an object which it completely attained. It was followed by *the Critic*, a dramatic burlesque, on the plan of the Duke of Buckingham's *Rehearsal*. In this piece the most noted dramatic absurdities of the times were very happily ridiculed; and its reception shewed the infinite amusement which it afforded to the public. Such pieces, however ably written, can only look to a temporary reputation: new absurdities soon succeed to the old; and when the miserable dramas, which have been ridiculed are forgotten, the satire directed against them loses its principal attraction. The first piece of the kind, being considered as a model, is alone likely to survive; and after many successful imitations of it during the last century, *the Rehearsal* still remains the most distinguished.

For twenty years afterwards, the dramatic genius of Sheridan slept. He was now engaged in pursuits of a different class, and in pleasures from which he could not allot an interval for the labour of composition.

As his circumstances improved, his expences were increased; and his establishment did not fail to keep pace with the extent of his credit, rather than of his resources. His entertainments were distinguished for their profusion, and their frequency; and his own wit and reputation, joined to the attractions of Mrs. Sheridan's vocal powers, quickly drew around him a society of distinction.

By Mr. Burke, whose particular friendship he had engaged, he was introduced to that club where Johnson, Goldsmith, and Reynolds, with other celebrated characters, enjoyed a society to which the eminent alone were admitted. On this occasion, it is said that Johnson, with his usual spleen, could not help muttering something of players and buffoons: but Burke quickly silenced his murmurs by observing, that the first comic writer of the age was an honour to any society to which he could be introduced.

The life which Sheridan now led, so flattering both to vanity and pleasure, was entirely agreeable to his feelings, but wholly destructive to his fortune. While his industry was altogether relaxed, his embarrassments daily increased; and as a total want of economy and order aggravated the effects of a thoughtless profusion, his income, however improved, bore no proportion to his expences. The importunity of creditors soon became incessant: and it was only by his entrance into a new career that he was extricated from the more disagreeable consequences of their impatience. Mr. Fox, who now ranked among his intimate friends, pointed out to him a seat in the House of Commons as a means of escaping from his difficulties, and of displaying his talents on a more elevated theatre. The advice was supported by too many powerful considerations not to be eagerly followed up by Sheridan; and his access to the Duke of Portland, then principal in the opposition, made him hope to overcome, by the power of patronage, those obstacles which arose from the want of pecuniary resources. At the general election, however, in 1780, his Grace had completed *his list of Members*; and he was therefore obliged to try what address could effect in a *free* borough. One of the Members for Stafford had rendered himself very unpopular; and trusting to this circumstance, and to the support of some leading men, he proceeded thither as a candidate. He found every reason to hope for success, provided he could procure a thousand pounds, a sum requisite even in that patriotic and incorrupt borough: and having, by solicitations and promises, raised this money among his friends, he was returned a Member for Stafford.

During the first years of his attendance in the House of Commons, he gave no indication of peculiar oratorical abilities: yet, we are told, that he had taken considerable pains to qualify himself for public speaking, by declaiming at the private meetings of his friends; and that it was customary for him to exercise his ingenuity by advocating first the one side of the question and then the other. He, however, shewed himself an active and useful partizan to the Rockingham party, with which he associated himself; and, out of doors, both his voice and his pen were employed in exciting the public mind against the administration of Lord North. At popular meetings his oratory was exerted with success; and some acrimonious papers in the *Englishman*, and other periodical publications, are attributed to his pen.

When, in 1782, the Marquis of Rockingham and his friends forced their way into office, Fox was appointed Secretary of State for the Foreign Department, and Sheridan his under Secretary. Whatever might be the abilities of these friends for the conduct of foreign affairs,

their official assiduity and habits of business, at least, met with no particular applause.—Most readers have heard of the famous pasquinade, said to have been affixed to the door of Mr. Fox's office:—"No letters received "here on Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday, "Thursday, Friday, and Saturday; and none "answered on any day."

The official cares, or honours, of Sheridan were of short duration. On the death of the Marquis of Rockingham, the court ventured to throw off the yoke of the aristocracy; and the Earl of Shelburn suddenly appeared at the head of new and unexpected counsels. Sheridan and his friends had now only to avenge themselves by employing every resource against their new antagonists; and, in an evil hour, they availed themselves of the assistance of Lord North and his party, whom they had long pursued with unrelenting asperity. This coalition, which shewed both parties to be either very good-humoured or very unprincipled, though it gave a temporary preponderancy to them in the House of Commons, almost annihilated their party in the nation. They, however, included several men of shining talents among their numbers; and no effort was spared to render their antagonists odious and contemptible. Sheridan's literary talents were again displayed in various periodical publications; particularly in the *Jesuit*, a paper which is still remembered for a particular incident in its history. Some severe strictures on the court, in one of its numbers, drew down a prosecution on the printer, which, though suspended during the succeeding changes, was resumed under the administration of Mr. Pitt. The printer, Wilkie, who had the fidelity and magnanimity to conceal the name of the author, was condemned to twelve months imprisonment; and though both his person and his circumstances suffered during this confinement, he was rewarded by his party with nothing but neglect, and was not even repaid his expences. Such is the gratitude of factions, when their ends have once been attained!

The coalition proved too powerful for the court; and the Sovereign having been again compelled to receive such ministers as the aristocracy chose to assign him, Sheridan was, in April 1783, appointed Joint Secretary of the Treasury. The famous bill, by which Fox at this time endeavoured to wrest the patronage of India from the crown, and to place it in the hands of the House of Commons, afforded Sheridan a splendid opportunity for the display of his oratorical powers; a speech, which he delivered on this occasion, at once acquired him high reputation for eloquence. But no talents could resist the influence of the East India Company, when combined with the hatred of the crown and the clamours of the people. After two administrations, whose duration did not exceed eleven months in all, the Rockingham party were destined to experience a long exile from the sweets of office.

Sheridan took a conspicuous part in the most important debates which succeeded; and was soon distinguished as a leading orator of the opposition. His irony and irresistible humour, which never failed to turn the laugh against his opponents, were particularly galling to the irritable temper of Pitt, who could not endure that derision which he perpetually endeavoured to excite against others. On one occasion, the wit of Sheridan was so pointed and happy, that the premier, transported beyond all patience, could not, in his reply, refrain from some silly allusions to his opponent's condition of life; observing, that his attempts at low humour might very well suit that stage to which he was most accustomed, but that they were very ill adapted to the dignity of a British Senate. Sheridan, with great presence of mind, exposed the mean petulance of this attack; and concluded by assuring the premier, that, if he ever wrote another comedy, he would not fail to introduce the character of the *Angry Boy*. In his future contests with Sheridan, Pitt refrained from this illiberal mode of attack, which he found prejudicial only to himself; but there was none of his opponents with whom he had more frequent or more angry discussions. Sheridan seemed to entertain a peculiar antipathy to the arrogance of Pitt; and Pitt could bear to be confuted, but not to be held up to laughter.

On the trial of Warren Hastings, which the opposition orators eagerly seized upon as a field for the display of their eloquence, Sheridan gave the most decided proofs of his powers, and nearly bore away the palm from all his competitors. Of his two most remarkable speeches on this occasion, each extending to the length of five hours, the one related to the article of corruption and pillage, and the other summed up the charge respecting the cruelties committed towards the Princesses of Oude. Both these orations called forth the admiration of the hearers, and their applauses were resounded throughout the nation; but the last was considered as a piece of eloquence which had scarcely been rivalled in modern times. The subject, indeed, afforded him every op-

portunity for laying hold of all the stronger emotions of the human breast; and his audience, which filled Westminster-Hall, were by turns melted into tears, or inflamed with unutterable indignation. When he concluded, the spectators were delighted to see Mr. Burke, who had exhausted all his own powers on this splendid occasion, embrace his rival orator, and declare that now he had heard the consummation of eloquence. When the Commons retired to their own chamber, Burke continued his panegyric, nearly in the following terms:

"He has this day surprised the thousands, "who hung with rapture on his accents, by "such an array of talents, such an exhibition "of capacity, such a display of powers, as "are unparalleled in the annals of oratory; a "display that reflected honour on himself, "lustre upon letters, renown upon parliament, "glory upon the country. Of all species of "rhetoric, of every kind of eloquence that "has been witnessed or recorded, either in "ancient or in modern times; whatever the "acuteness of the bar, the dignity of the "senate, the solidity of the judgment-seat, "and the sacred morality of the pulpit have "hitherto furnished, nothing has surpassed, "nothing has equalled what we have this day "heard in Westminster Hall. No holy seer "of religion, no sage, no statesman, no orator, "no man of any literary description whatever, "has come up, in the one instance, to the "pure sentiments of morality, or, in the "other, to that variety of knowledge, force "of imagination, propriety and vivacity of "allusion, beauty and elegance of diction, "strength and copiousness of style, pathos and "sublimity of conception, to which we have "this day listened with ardour and admiration. "From poetry up to eloquence, there is not "a species of composition, of which a com- "plete and perfect specimen might not, from "that single speech, be culled and collected."

The superior eloquence of Sheridan was now beyond all question; but the next great occasion on which it was exerted, procured him no increase of popularity either among the wise or the vulgar. When an unfortunate malady, in 1788, rendered his Majesty incapable, for the time, of taking any share in the administration, a violent struggle commenced between Pitt and his opponents; the former resolving to retain the reins of government in his hands, and the latter as resolute to drive him from his post and secure themselves in his place. The opposition were unluckily driven to support their pretensions by high monarchical principles; and Pitt had simply to appear as the strenuous defender of the constitution. *They* maintained that, on the incapacity of the King, no less than on his death, the Prince of Wales, as next heir, was entitled *of right*, to undertake the government: *he* asserted, what indeed was allowed even under the tyrannical reign of Henry the Eighth, that *regency*, as well as *succession*, demands the sanction of the Houses of Parliament.

The acrimony with which the contests on this occasion were conducted, was honourable to neither party; but the people were most shocked at the unfeeling expressions with which the opposition, and particularly Burke, insulted the condition of the unhappy Monarch. Sheridan, whose wit and social talents had already procured him much favour at Carleton House, repaid the patronage of the Prince by the most zealous efforts in his cause. The sudden recovery of the King, however, put a mortifying end to all the hopes of the opposition, and place and power now seemed wholly beyond their grasp.

The French Revolution soon called all political parties to a contest not less keen, and far more protracted. Pitt here found an opportunity to render his own influence over the minds of the nation irresistible; and Burke, with Portland, Loughborough, and some other members of the opposition, discovered the means of quitting their party, and rising to place, without exciting odium. Sheridan, with those who remained firm to the opposition were inflamed to the highest indignation by this desertion of their friends, which they branded as the basest apostacy: but the consternation with which Burke and his new associates had inspired the nation, effectually turned the scale in their favour; and the opposition were for several years afterwards, looked upon as nothing better than domestic traitors. Sheridan, however, had his revenge. He perpetually tortured the infuriated mind of Burke with the most poignant satire, reminding him of his former sentiments, and drawing the blackest pictures of his apostacy. Burke, in an unguarded moment of extreme passion, confessed that these were the stings which at length drove him out of the House of Commons.

Fatigued and disgusted by unavailing efforts against an uncontroulable majority, Fox, and most of his adherents, withdrew from their duty in Parliament, declaring that they saw no hopes of benefiting their country. Sheridan refused to follow their example; and by re-

maining in the House, now found himself placed at the head of opposition. But his occasional invectives against Ministers, however brilliant, procured him little reputation in comparison of one instance on which he seized a happy occasion to convince the public that he entertained none of the traitorous sentiments which had been ascribed to him. His speech on the mutiny at the Nore teemed with the most glowing sentiments of loyalty, while he called upon every faithful Briton to rally round the throne, and suppress the insolent spirit of mutiny and rebellion. This oration entirely reconciled him to many by whom he was previously held in detestation.

He had, indeed, already given much gratification in another way, to the unbounded loyalty of our countrymen. His unlimited expences had obliged him to leave the treasury of Drury-lane theatre in a very exhausted condition. Not only the renters, but even the players were unpaid; and nothing remained but either a bankruptcy, or some signal effort to rescue the theatre from its embarrassments. The translation of a German play of Kotzebue, which had just then appeared, seemed to afford the means of turning the fervent loyalty of the nation to good account; and after an interval of twenty years, Sheridan resumed his dramatic pen to modify the labours of the German tragedian. His alterations were calculated entirely to suit the spirit of the times; and the famous speech, which he put into the mouth of *Rolla*, contained the most skillful allusions to Bonaparte, who at that time was stationed on the opposite coast with the Army of England. It is needless to dwell on the extraordinary reception of this piece. The splendour of its decorations, and its extravagant appeals, would have insured its success at any period; and the enthusiastic loyalty of its sentiments was in exact unison with the state of national feeling.

The merits of Sheridan in these alterations deserve little attention. It is said, that, with an indolence which had long been gaining upon him, he had not completed the last scenes till the very night of representation. His muse seems now to have bidden farewell to the stage; for it were insulting to ascribe to him a share in the pantomimic opera of *Forty Thieves*.

On the political theatre, however, he still continued to figure. When Pitt after having promised equal rights to the Irish Catholics, as a recompence for their concurrence in the Union, was obliged to quit his post when he could not redeem his pledges; and left Addington, with other political friends, as his substitutes: Sheridan warmly exerted himself to expose the chicane. It was on this occasion that he convulsed the House of Commons with laughter, by comparing the new administration to the under parts of an ancient giant, which were left on the stool after the upper parts had, by main force, been pulled off.

Addington and his friends, secure of the favour of the Court, ventured to act independently, and thus drew down upon themselves the united hostilities of Fox and Pitt. Sheridan stood aloof, unwilling to act in concert with a man whom he disliked and suspected; and the succeeding conduct of Pitt, in retaining the reins of government, to the exclusion of all who assisted him to gain them, justified the sagacity of Sheridan.

The unexpected death of Pitt once more opened the doors of office to the partizans of Fox, whom the Court had no longer the means of excluding. From the acknowledged talents, and long services of Sheridan to his party, he was now, in the opinion of every one, to be raised to one of the most exalted stations in the government; and men were surprized to find him contented with the subordinate office of Treasurer of the Navy, without even a seat in the Cabinet. It is probable, however, that neither his party nor himself considered this as any instance of neglect. The Treasurership of the Navy, being nearly a sinecure, was most suited to his habits; and four thousand a year, without labour, might appear to him equal to the most prominent and busy station in the government.

His political conduct, during his continuance in office, was merely a blank; and was only distinguished by his receding entirely from the prosecution of Marquis Wellesley, in which he had previously appeared very forward. The apartments assigned to him in Somerset House, were found to admit of very extensive preparations for a *fête*, which he accordingly gave, in so magnificent a stile as entirely to eclipse the inauguration entertainments of his colleagues.

At the dissolution of Parliament, which succeeded the death of Fox, Sheridan received a very mortifying proof of the unpopularity which his party had incurred during their administration. Coming forward as a candidate for the representation of Westminster, to which he had powerful claims, both from his talents

and from his friendship with Mr. Fox, he was astonished, on ascending the hustings, to find himself assailed by hisses, and by every mark of popular indignation. His chagrin was complete; and though coalescing with the ministerial candidate, he succeeded in gaining his seat, he found himself deprived of all claims to independent popularity. At the last election, he again appeared on the hustings at Westminster: and though he was received less unfavourably, being now out of office, he had the mortification to see not only Sir Francis Burdett, but even Lord Cochrane, a new adventurer, elected by a great majority. His old constituents at Stafford also became enraged against him; and he now represents a close borough, under the patronage of the Grenville family!

Such is the political history of Mr. Sheridan, from which it appears that his fame as a statesman has chiefly arisen from his talents in the House of Commons. His manner, as an orator, is plain without awkwardness; his voice clear, strong, and agreeable to the ear. His elocution at times is forcible, and he can occasionally introduce strokes of the pathetic, or the vehement, which produce an almost electrical effect on his hearers. But the great characteristic of his orations is the admirable wit and humour with which they are interspersed. These are not the mere hasty and impotent ebullitions of the moment, but are carefully premeditated, and so nicely adapted to the occasion, that their effect is wholly irresistable. It is not to be doubted that the reputation of his eloquence has been much increased by the dexterous manner in which he has seized upon favourable occasions to exert it. He has very generally been on the popular side, and has consequently spoken in unison with the feelings of the nation. The effects of this dexterity were very evident on the occasion of the mutiny at the Nore, to which we have already alluded; and not less remarkable in regard to the volunteers, to whom he moved a vote of thanks, and whom he warmly defended against the impolitic sarcasms of some of his colleagues.

We have already noticed the several dramatic productions of Mr. Sheridan, which constitute the foundations of his literary fame. His verses to Miss Linley, however, the effusions of his fancy while warmed by love, as well as several of his songs, prove that he was capable of attaining eminence in lyric poetry. On the death of Garrick, he wrote a monody, which contains good verse, and several very ingenious poetical thoughts: but it is too long, too formal, and too cold. The powers of Mrs. Yates, who recited it on the stage, failed to render it impressive.

Mr. Sheridan's conduct as the manager of a theatre, has met with approbation from no quarter. The affairs of the theatre, after having for many years been left in inextricable confusion, have at length been put under the superintendence of the Court of Chancery; and Sheridan has contentedly retired from the cares of management, in consideration of an allowance of two thousand a year. His neglect of the dramatic productions placed in his hands, has long been an object of censure: the most laboured efforts of the muse have been consigned, without perusal, to his cabinet or his kitchen.

To speak of the private characters of cotemporaries is an invidious task. The comic talents of Sheridan have made his company extremely acceptable to some of the highest personages in the state. He is accounted a favourite at Carleton House, and is found in the gayest circles of fashion. But his love of splendour and want of economy have been as injurious to his reputation, as they have been destructive to his real happiness. He might have been rich and independent; nor is his poverty to be attributed to virtue, but to a very blameable negligence.

Three years after the death of his first wife, Sheridan married Miss Ogle, daughter of the Dean of Winchester, a lady distinguished for many amiable qualities, and with a mind well fitted to combat with her difficult circumstances. Thomas Sheridan, his only son by his first wife, seems to possess abilities resembling those of his father. He held a lucrative appointment as Muster-Master-General of Ireland, under the last administration; but of this office he was deprived, because his father refused to become the friend, or remain the silent opponent, of the present ministers.

ORIGINAL COMMUNICATIONS.

ON THE NATIONAL VARIETIES OF THE DRAMA.

ESSAY I.

As among the works of Nature no man can properly call a river deep, or a mountain high, without the knowledge of many mountains, and many rivers; so, in the productions of Genius, nothing can be stiled excellent till it hath been compared with other works of the same kind.

Dr. Johnson's Preface to Shakspeare.

IT hath been found difficult to-define the nature of that pleasure which we derive from the productions of imitative ingenuity. There seems to be gratification independent of real or personal feelings in the contemplation of whatever we know to be only a fictitious resemblance of truth; and that to this gratification we resign ourselves without any fearful apprehension, indulging the whole power of fancy without restraint. When we are once convinced that the objects and actions which we behold have no need of our actual agency in their concerns; that we are in no danger of sharing their sufferings, while we participate in their sorrows; that the hilarity of their joy, while it excites our warmest sensations, demands no care for the consequences of such indulgence; in a word, when we feel that we may be as independent as we choose to be, of those incidents which present themselves to our attention, we resign the reins to our sensibility, and suffer ourselves to be carried far beyond the contracted and timid barrier of self. It is to this sort of gratification that the imitative arts owe their astonishing power over the human mind: they supply us with all the objects that interest our most acute feelings, while they divest those feelings of all immediate personal solicitude. Of these arts, the most delightful must therefore be that which, while it leaves our individual interest uninjured, approaches the nearest to reality. It is manifest that reality itself would often be painful, where its representation might be pleasing: we are curious to know the most particular circumstances of the most distressing event, at the actual sight of which we should have turned away with horror. Were we therefore to know that the same event would be represented by an accurate imitation of reality, we should contemplate the scene with satisfaction, and the degree of horror that might be excited would not impede the more pleasing sensations of gratified curiosity or compassion.

If this be admitted we shall be no longer at a loss to account for the pleasure which we derive from dramatical exhibitions, nor for the tender gratification which we feel in the indulgence of those severe sensations excited by the muse of tragedy. In the drama we meet with as near an approach to reality as the human mind can bear: the line which separates fiction from truth on the theatre, may, by the exquisite deceptions of the perspective painter, by the skilful discrimination of the actor, and by the delicate delineations of the poet, be rendered indefinitely minute. We hear and behold every incident as though we were spectators of real occurrences, while the internal conviction that all is but the representation of what has or may have been, recals us to ourselves, and softens the acuteness of our feelings with something like that felicity which Lucretius thus elegantly describes:

Suave, mari magno turbantibus æquora ventis,
E terra magnum alterius spectare laborem;
Non quia vexari quemquam'st jucunda voluptas,
Sed, quibus ipse malis careas, quia cernere suave'st.
Suave etiam belli certamina magna tueri,
Per campos instructa, tua sine parte pericli;
Sĕd nil dulcius est, bene quam munita tenere, &c.

'Tis grateful to behold from the firm shore,
While mighty billows and conflicting winds
Vex the wide ocean, the tremendous toil
Another undergoes: not that there's joy,
Or pleasure in a fellow-creature's pain,
But that 'tis grateful to contemplate woes,
Ourselves are free from. Grateful is the sight
Even of war, extending its dread strife
Oe'r the wide fields in terrible array,
Thyself in distant safety gazing on:
Yet nought is more delightful———&c.

It is not surprising that wherever men are to be found there should be some attempts to represent human actions and their consequences; accordingly we meet with some traces of the drama among the most barbarous nations: the

fictious scene in Mexico and Otaheite, has been adorned with every species of irregular elegance; and in some parts of Asia the day has seemed too short for the transactions of the dramatic fable, assisted with all the imposing grandeur of eastern prodigality. If any thing can derive respectability from being universal, the theatre may boast of the highest claim to esteem.

It might be reasonably expected that the characteristics of dramatic pieces would be the same as those of the nations to which they belong, and that the stage would be always the correct mirror of its actual spectators. This, however, is not exactly the case. The serious Spaniard is found to be fond of relaxing the general severity of his manners with the lightest comic ribaldry, interspersed with incidents rather brutal than tragic; while the flippant Frenchman can conceive no excellence in a tragedy which does not stalk and harangue for three hours through an unchanging scene; and sits down with unmoved patience to a sentimental comedy in rhyme, while the airy and frivolous drama, which characterises his own manners, is condemned to the *petits theatres* of the mob. Many reasons may be given for this disparity between the habits of a nation, and its favourite dramatic exhibitions. The scene does not always rise immediately out of the manners of the people; the actions of heroes, and such incidents as live in the traditions of the early ages, are among their first representations: on these a solemnity of language and costume is bestowed, and in beholding the deeds of their progenitors, whom they revere, the spectators expect such manners as are elevated far above their own. Among many nations, the first efforts of the drama have been enlisted among the powers of the priesthood; and that natural desire of mankind to behold the actions of men, is diverted into the means of increasing their superstition; the scene is trodden by gods and demons, or is filled with saints, patriarchs, and all the personified attributes of the human mind. Nor is it the least to be considered, that the imitation of the dramatic pieces of other nations has frequently introduced such manners on the theatre, as maintain their ground through veneration rather than congenial sentiment, and while they hurt the growth of the national drama, are seen and heard with the vague predilection of fancied admiration.

To investigate and to compare the theatrical exhibitions of different ages and countries, and to detail the causes of their incongruity with national character and with each other, afford together a wide and interesting field of speculation. A field which abounds indeed with flowers; the highest and most inaccessable parts of which, however they may be overspread with the ravages of ignorance or barbarity, exhibit many of the beauties of the most bright and luxuriant vegetation. GREECE offers herself as the first and most engaging object in such a contemplation. The principal laws which are revered by critics as the edicts of genuine taste, have emanated from her. The labours of her sons have been regarded as the types of every thing that is correct in judgment or lovely in imagination; and almost every dereliction from the models of their hands has been considered as a deformity, and consigned to the Lethe of contempt, or the scorpion whip of ridicule. Over no department of literature has the severity of her legislation more strictly extended itself than over the drama: a severity so contrary to the general manners of her cities and her states, that we must look for its cause not in the nature of her political institutions, nor in the characters of her inhabitants, but in some power more constant than the one, and more tyrannical than the other.

The Grecian drama derived the first seeds of its origin from the same productions as have, when cultivated in other countries, sprung into various species of the same plant. These prolific productions were the songs of wandering bards, who, in the infancy or before the birth of letters, chanted hymns to the deity, celebrated the actions of heroes, and recited the narratives of memorable events. The rhapsodists of Greece, and the minstrels of Britain, differed materially in one respect: the former did not so much address themselves to the head of a clan as to a whole people, who severally participated in the glory of the national song, while the latter were commonly maintained by feudal lords, whose individual actions, or whose families, were the principal topics of all their songs. The rhapsodists of the Greeks necessarily attached themselves to the priests, and became subservient to their purposes, since the greatest assemblages of the people were on days of religious festivity; days which often afforded the bard both a theme and an audience. At every pause which the choristers who conducted the solemn anthems of the people to the divinity, made in their music, the rhapsodists took up the theme in recitative, and represented either singly, alternately, or in conversation, the actions of some hero, or the exploits of the presiding god. The sacrifices of Bacchus, in particular, offered many

advantages for the introduction of a more regular dramatic form: every sort of indulgence was allowed to those who personated Silenus and the Satyrs: their persons were sacred and their tongues unrestrained. These feigned characters supported a kind of drama, into which all the licentiousness of the ideal personages was admitted; and the numerous actions, which tradition had attributed to the attendants on the god of wine, formed the ground-work of the fable. Nor were the higher actions of Bacchus left unperformed: his numerous heroic exploits supplied a more serious band of actors with diversified matter for their imitative art, and the rhapsodists, assuming the persons of those who had experienced his benefits or his vengeance, either celebrated his transcendant goodness or deplored their own well-merited misery.

Successful in these commencements, the directors of them attempted the representation of other fables, and taught the performers what it was proper for each of them to say: for, probably, at first, each rhapsodist, being independent of the other, uttered what his own imagination dictated to him, according to the character he had assumed. It is uncertain whether these directions were given by word of mouth even at the time of Thespis and Susarion, who are mentioned by the ancients rather as the *contrivers* than the *writers* of tragedy and comedy. Many of the religious mummeries or mystic dramas performed among the Catholics of Italy, were unwritten: the director assigned the part of our Saviour to one, and of Judas Iscariot to another, and having, like the inventor of a modern pantomime, determined the business of each scene, he left the actual performance to the discretion of the actor. It is probable that the tragedies of Thespis, and the comedies of Susarion, were performed in the same manner before the then rude inhabitants of Attica.

As the rhapsodists of Greece and Asia Minor, united to the holy choir of the priests, thus commenced the drama in Greece, so the minstrels of Britain and other parts of Europe, being received into the service of the church, began to perform sacred mysteries and moralities; but they were not honoured like the rhapsodists: they were, on the contrary, despised, and were permitted to assume the characters of Christ and the Saints, because being already supposed to be damned by their profession, they could not by the blasphemy of such personation add to the eternity of their future punishment. With performers so degraded, whose very touch was accounted an impurity, it cannot be wondered that the drama of modern Europe made not the same rapid progress as in Greece. The more honourable minstrels who were entertained in the families of barons and princes, remained separate from each other, and were confined to the duties of celebrating their entertainers, while those who sought employment in the cloisters, had their tasks assigned them by the most stupid of the panders of superstition. Dramatic representation is, however, so natural to man, that in spite of all the surrounding impediments which opposed its elevation, it struggled into notice. The *moralities* assumed a more regular form, and many of the *sacred mysteries* were written with some regard to expression and character: *masques* were performed by persons of rank, with all the aids of dance and music; and *comedy* began to laugh aloud, with all the low mirth of clownish buffoonery. The human mind, also, began to weigh its own opinions, and to find that the balance of reason was against the sombrous and hollow mummery of cloistered bigotry. The writings of Greece and Rome were read, studied, and imitated; and the drama, as well as the other compositions of the human intellect, took a tincture from those powerful streams. Italy and France shared the form of the ancient Grecian drama between them: the former by substituting songs and musical airs in place of the chorus, and by sustaining the language of the dialogue with recitative, have formed the enchanting opera; while the latter, by taking the grandeur of the lengthened harangue, and the unities of time and place, have endeavoured to form something superior to nature, according to the recipes of Aristotle. Spain still retained her monkish mysteries, blended with Moorish legends; while Britain, and Britain alone, as she threw off the chain of superstition, and looked up to heaven for her creed, so she rejected the yoke of critical bigotry, and looked round to nature for the genuine gospel of taste. Fortunately for Britain, at that moment, a luminary arose from the hand of nature herself, whose brightness as far excelled the modelled lustre of critical accuracy, as the orb of day excels the blaze of a patent lamp. This luminary was the genius of Shakspeare: the drama felt his invigorating beams, and while its branches shot out into luxuriant wildness, its beauteous and awful flowers expanded like the amaranth, with eternal and transcendant bloom.

Perhaps nothing can more strongly pourtray the general weakness of the human genius, than that continual desire to look up to preceding authors as models of genuine taste, rather than to nature herself, who was the model from

which those authors drew their excellence.—The study of the works of eminent masters has made many copyists, but never yet formed a genuine artist: Claude painted from nature alone, and it was the wish of an illustrious Italian master, that he could forget he had ever seen the paintings of any other. The earliest authors of every country describe with the greatest vigour, while their best imitators perish as they pursue their lofty flights. It is for this reason that the world has but one Homer, and England but one Shakspeare. Those who follow them have drawn from them, and have forgotten that nature is in existence.

The drama of Greece grew gradually to as much perfection as it could attain: it had its infancy with the follies of infancy, and imbibed habits which, when it arose to manhood, became incontroulable. In the merits of its best dramatic authors, there is no very great disparity: a few paternal features are observable in the offspring of each, which, although they have their peculiar beauties, are yet almost all equally beautiful. But in the drama of Britain the case is widely different. Shakspeare wanted not the progressive aid of predecessors: he saw no cotemporaries, whose merit he might rival or imitate: the expansion of the human mind had been sudden: the recent reformation in religion had prepared mankind for every thing that was original and unfettered by human ordinances. Himself untrammelled by the pedantry of school knowledge, and with nothing before him but the moralities and mysteries of the preceding age, which from principle he was to despise, he raised the rude, uncultivated infancy of the British drama into sudden and vigorous manhood. But it was a figure which stood alone; not a model for imitation: a bold and masterly irregularity, caught from the freedom of nature, and irreducible to the sophistry of rules, mocked the efforts of his successors. Euripides and Sophocles might have felt all the advantages of the example of Æschylus: the dramatic form of their fable, the introduction of the chorusses, the observance of the unities, all which he had derived from the ancient customs of the rhapsodists, marked out such strong features as must necessarily have given their productions a resemblance with those of their predecessor, and therefore other imitations would have been more easy. But Fletcher, Massinger, and Rowe, when they regarded Shakspeare as the head of a new dramatic school, found that they had given themselves a master indeed, but not an instructor: they bowed down before him; they copied his motions, and sometimes caught the tone of his accents, but they perceived not the direction of his right hand, which pointed to the throne of nature, and seemed to say "worship not me: I am but a man as yourselves: direct your adorations to the Being from whom I have drawn that divine inspiration which has set me so high in your estimation."

Of the three tragic poets of Greece, whose remains have descended to us, the genius of Æschylus has been justly compared with that of Shakspeare. Mr. Cumberland has so well delineated the corresponding characteristics of these two fathers of the drama, that I shall not apologise to the reader for transcribing the whole passage.

"When I see the names of these two great luminaries of the dramatic sphere, so distant in time, but so nearly allied in genius, casually brought in contact by the nature of my subject, I cannot help pausing for a while in this place, to indulge so interesting a contemplation, in which I find my mind balanced between two objects, that seem to have equal claims upon me for my admiration. Æschylus is justly stiled the father of tragedy, but this is not to be interpreted as if he was the inventor of it: Shakspeare with equal justice claims the same title, and his originality is qualified with the same exception: The Greek tragedy was not more rude and undigested when Æschylus brought it into shape, than the English tragedy was when Shakspeare began to write: If, therefore, it be granted that he had no aids from the Greek theatre (and I think this is not likely to be disputed), so far these great masters are upon an equal ground. Æschylus was a warrior of high repute, of a lofty generous spirit, and deep as it should seem in the erudition of his times: In all these particulars he has great advantage over our countryman, who was humbly born, of the most menial occupation, and, as it is generally thought, unlearned. Æschylus had the whole epic of Homer in his hands, the Iliad, Odyssey, and that prolific source of dramatic fable, the Ilias Minor; he had also a great fabulous creation to resort to amongst his own divinities, characters ready defined, and an audience whose superstition was prepared for every thing he could offer; he had therefore a firmer and broader stage (if I may be allowed the expression) under his feet than Shakspeare had. His fables in general are Homeric, and yet it does not follow that we can pronounce for Shakspeare, that he is more original in his plots, for I understand that late researches have traced him in all,

"or nearly all: Both poets added so much "machinery and invention of their own to the "conduct of their fables, that whatever might "have been the source, still their streams have "little or no taste of the spring they flowed "from. In point of character we have better "grounds to decide, and yet it is but justice "to observe, that it is not fair to bring a man-"gled poet in comparison with one who is en-"tire: In his divine personages Æschylus has "the field of heaven, and of hell also, to him-"self; in his heroic and military characters he "has never been excelled; he had too good a "model within his own bosom to fail of mak-"ing these delineations natural. In his imagi-"nary beings, also, he will be found a respect-"able, though not an equal, rival of our poet; "but in the variety of character, in all the "nicer touches of nature, in all the extrava-"gancies of caprice and humour, from the "boldest feature down to the minutest foible, "Shakspeare stands alone; such persons as he "delineates never came into the contemplation "of Æschylus as a poet; his tragedy has no "dealing with them; the simplicity of the "Greek fable, and the great portion of the "drama filled up by the chorus, allow of little "variety of character, and the most which "can be said of Æschylus in this particular is, "that he never offends against nature or pro-"priety, whether his cast is in the terrible or "pathetic, the elevated or the simple. His "versification, with the intermixture of lyric "composition, is more various than that of "Shakspeare; both are lofty and sublime in "the extreme, abundantly metaphorical, and "sometimes extravagant:

"———*Nubes et inania captat.*

"This may be said of each poet in his turn; "in each the critic, if he is in search for de-"fects, will readily enough discover—

"*In scenam missus magno cum pondere versus.*

"Both were subject to be hurried on by an un-"controulable impulse, nor could nature alone "suffice for either: Æschylus had an apt crea-"tion of imaginary beings at command—

"He could call spirits from the vasty deep,

"and they "would come"—Shakspeare, hav-"ing no such creation in resource, boldly made "one of his own; if Æschylus, therefore, was "invincible, he owed it to his armour, and "that, like the armour of Æneas, was the "work of the Gods; but the unassisted inven-"tion of Shakspeare seized all and more than "superstition supplied to Æschylus."

Observer, No. 55.

This comparison Mr. Cumberland extends much farther, and in making many very excellent observations on the characters of *Macbeth* and *Richard the Third*, he sets some passages of those exquisite pieces in contrast with similar passages from the dramas of Æschylus. But in mentioning this, I would not be understood to suppose that my readers can be unacquainted with Mr. Cumberland's most estimable work: arguments and extracts, from a work so universally known, are appeals to the most powerful, and to the most extensive evidence, in favour of my opinions.

In the following essays, however, it will not be my intention to estimate the superior genius of the dramatic authors of each country, so much as to examine the different traits which have characterized the conduct of the drama itself. The one subject will, indeed, be frequently blended with the other; but I must not permit the most attractive, which is the genius of the authors themselves, to seduce me from a close investigation of that which, in a general point of view, is the most useful; for such certainly will be the contemplation of the nature of the drama itself, and of the causes which have given it such different features among different nations. *M. N.*

(To be continued.)

ADVICE TO MEMBERS OF A CERTAIN HOUSE.

AS your winter campaign is now approaching, and as the *good of our country* is at all times the order of the day, can I do better than offer a few hints to the aspiring patriot, who, convinced that nothing but an administration formed by himself and friends can save his bleeding country, and that all honour and honesty, are confined to them alone, steps boldly forward, resolved, through thick and thin, to strain every nerve to hasten the coming of his blessed millennium.

We will suppose that the long-wished-for, long-expected moment is at length arrived, and that a dissolution has at length taken place,

—now then! is the time to exert your energies.

Let the time-serving Statesman come in for a snug borough, you disdain such paltry ambition; no! like Phæton, *you* must set the world on fire. In your zeal for the repose of the country, and the purity of election, what so efficacious as a warm canvas, and a protracted poll?—This *you* must call taking the sense of the county, though, God knows, if they had any sense left, *you* would stand but an indifferent chance.

You must take it for granted, that your opponents are knaves, contractors, millers, and and tories; you, and *you alone*, are the true and staunch *Whigs and Patriots*. Recollect that you must keep fast hold of the *name*, for though both your principles and practice are in direct opposition to every item of *original* Whiggism, yet if you stand boldly out, the majority of your constituents will be more easily caught by the name than by the thing itself.

In your zeal for the *freedom of election*, take care to have it all on your own side—if the friends of your opponent can neither get *to*, nor *from* the hustings, without being insulted—why, it is nothing more than an exuberance of patriotism, and *they* who would oppose it, must be tyrants indeed.

Whatever money is spent by your opponent, recollect *that* is to bribe the *honest* electors out of their liberty; but whatever is spent by *yourself*, is in the sacred cause of freedom.

Whilst you talk of your patriotism, be careful to talk also of your poverty; those who have nothing will like you the better as resembling themselves, and those who have a little may be induced *to come down*; at all events, there is something patriotic in coming cheap into the house, as of course you will cost *less* when occasion serves.

If there is any thing in the character and conduct of your opponent, or of his thirteenth cousin, which may be made a subject of animadversion, or of ridicule, you may consider it as your own;—let it be the burden of your daily ditty on the hustings—if you cannot hurt his cause, yet still you may hurt his feelings. Be careful also to ask a number of questions, the less they are founded in truth, the more difficult it will be for him to *answer* them; as to a mere denial, *that* goes for nothing with an enlightened mob.

In addressing your motley audience, who are such great philosophers as to despise all titles, be careful notwithstanding to call them "Gen-"tlemen."—This word is also extremely useful in your canvas.—Not *many* years ago, an Alderman of the City of London, being candidate for a borough, not one hundred miles East from London Bridge, attended in the evening at the patriotic porter shop, amongst his friends and constituents. A huge lump of a fellow, in a blue frock and apron, having succeeded in edging him into a corner, seated himself directly opposite, and having *smoked him* for some time, at length addressed him: "Whoy, Measter Candidate, you does not "seem to know I."—"Indeed, Sir," said the candidate, "I do not recollect having the "honour of seeing you before." "Why mun," rejoined the jolly elector, "doest not remem-"ber in passing through the town, you saw a "gemman killing a hog, and you asked us "for his vote? Whoy that gemman was I, "and I'll kill a hog with e'er a gemman in the "county." It is unnecessary to add, that the Alderman immediately recognised his accomplished constituent.

If you hope for success, you must not be sparing of your promises, the more impracticable they are, it is all the better, as then you will have a good excuse for not performing them;—yet still you must *redeem your pledges*, that is, you must make a long speech, once or twice in the session, proposing some great and good changes, but close with saying, that as you are sorry to see that a wicked and corrupt majority are against you, you will not divide the house.

If your opponent happens to be a brewer, you have a wide field for your wit; you may say that he has enjoyed the *sweets* of the trade so long, that the public would be happy to have a little more of the *real bitters*.—You may talk of the poor being robbed, by the adulteration of their beverage—then descant on the tyranny of the brewers holding public houses, and tell your friends around you that they pay too much for their porter; but if, whilst your wrath is fuming and working like the liquor on which you are descanting, you happen to recollect that some of your nearest and best friends are brewers also, it may be necessary, by a well-timed compliment to *their* virtues, to check that fermentation amongst your auditory which might otherwise run over.

In closing a long speech, if your auditory should appear unusually *quiet*, you must give them a hint, by recommending them *to hear* your opponent; this they will perfectly understand, your end will be completely answered, and some *simple souls* will, perhaps, give you credit for your candour.

There is one very delicate subject, in the progress of your contest, which may require a little elucidation—the subject to which I re-

fer, is *coalition*.—Now the difficulty is not in *forming* the coalition, but in *denying* it when formed.—You may make a bargain with one of your antagonists to exchange vote for vote, until *you* are at the head of the poll, then *you* withdraw your assistance—this is *no coalition*; —make the same offer to your other antagonist —he may see through the trick, and refuse, or not understanding the new doctrine of fractions, may not be able to comprehend how you shall be able, keeping *one vote* to yourself, to give the *other* to *two* candidates;—*n'importe*, as you made the offer to both, it is a clear proof that you had no preference for either; therefore it is *no coalition*. If the world won't believe *you*, let *your Committee* swear the same thing: the deuce is in it if this won't do, at least *amongst the Saints*.

With respect to your conduct when *in* the house, it was my intention to *lay down* certain principles, but as it is likely you have laid down *your* principles already, I shall conclude with a few desultory hints for general reference.

As the readiest way to convince, is to be unintelligible, we will suppose you have taken up your subject, an Indian one for instance—you must first here lay in a stock of terms, talk much of the *Zenana*, and of the *Jaghcers*, for its support; set all the ladies crying for the fate of the poor *Bhow Begum*, swear she was robbed, ravished, and murdered—then to complete your climax, introduce the *Munny Begum*, swear that *she* was *robbed* also—the devil's in it if they won't believe that.

As to the misapplication of your terms, there are but few can find it out; you may, therefore, give us *Pergunnah* for *Perwannah*, or *Zemindar* for *Zemindarry*, as we often say *Prebend* for *Prebendary*.

You must describe the petty Rajah, whose cause you espouse, as a pattern of piety and virtue, even though you should confess that he has five hundred wives, and, for state purposes, had murdered half of his children; or with respect to some other, enlarge upon his parental affection, though you are at the same time obliged to confess that he had not a child except those he bought *ready made!*

The more daring your charge, or the more it flies in the face of common sense, the more credit you will be likely to gain with the bulk of mankind, who, instead of saying "it is impossible any man could be guilty of such "crimes," will argue "it is impossible that "any man could bring such charges if they "were not true."

Though economy is not one of your *private* virtues, be careful to let it be one of your public professions; let it thunder in the ear of the minister, until it is re-echod in the distant murmurs of the people—until some friend, whom you wish to oblige, comes to ask from the nation, a second payment, (for an island, perhaps) for what he has already sold for more than its real worth, then—changing the tragic for the comic mass, give a laughing speech to the house to save your consistency, and give a good humoured vote for the grant, though even in coincidence with the minister.

Let this minister be your constant object of attack whilst you are *out*, but should he be inclined to take you *in*, you have only, whilst changing sides, to shift your opera glass, and I should imagine you too good an actor to require a prompter to point out to you O. P. or P. S.

But the important moment arrives—death, or some other lucky chance clears the course, and your friends walk in for the plate.

Now begins your harvest: economy and reform are to be forgotten, whilst your waking dreams and nightly slumbers are haunted by sinecures, reversions, contracts, bonuses, and turtle feasts. Invite all your friends to a holiday *fête*, let it last as long as Jonah was in the whale's belly, and though you have no *officers of the Navy*, yet you may have some *officers of the Fleet* to grace the gala. If this passage is too obscure, the prompter's book for the "*Good-Natured* "*Man*," may, perhaps, explain the difficulty.

If you can find time from those serious avocations to attend to the affairs of the nation, you may step down for once to the house, just to quiz the ex-party, by crying roast meat—in this, you are to measure *their* feelings by your own, and to judge of their chagrin by your own superabundant satisfaction.

Whatever you had opposed as wrong *when out*, may be right *when in*, and should any measure have been peculiarly the object of your censure, you may venture *to double it*, as the odium must fall on those who first invented it.

As practice, or rather example, is more useful than precept, I shall just recommend to you to study some *flaming* characters of the present day;—he who runs may read, and with such glowing examples before you, further hints must be needless. I shall, therefore, sit down after moving an amendment, though I am free to confess, that although a friend to rational reform, I never expect to see it amongst the *elected*, until there is a reform

amongst the *Electors*. Whilst bribery, corruption, private interest, and overbearing impudence, mark the conduct of every petty borough during the election contest, is it to be expected that men of real feeling and nice honour will step forward to encounter the hydra?—No! they will most certainly leave it to the political mountebank, to strut his little hour upon the hustings with unblushing front, and bellow forth his oft-told tale of patriotism and reform.

L.

LA BONNE BOUCHE.

LITERARY FORESIGHT.

THE advantages resulting from the liberty of the press are too numerous, and too well known to require elucidation; but the following anecdote shews that some were able to appreciate its value, even in the times of ignorance and superstition. The first printing press established in England, was set up in Westminster Abbey, for the purpose of multiplying copies of the legends of the saints, and other *holy* publications of the Catholic ritual. The Abbot of Westminster patronizing it with great warmth, a *philosopher* observed to him, "If you don't "destroy *that machine*, it will destroy your "trade;" and certainly this opinion, that the general diffusion of knowledge resulting from it would occasion the downfall of priestly domination, and of *learned ignorance*, has been clearly proved by the result. Had the clergy, who then regulated all the affairs of the world, taken the alarm at the probable innovations resulting from it, bulls and curses would doubtless have been thundered out against the *impious printers*; but the fact was, that the Monks were tired of the drudgery of copying psalters and rituals, and gladly encouraged a discovery, which proved the source of their own destruction.

STATISTICAL ESTIMATE.

The numerous *economistical* writers of the present day, have founded their theories often on wild conjecture or on some favourite hypothesis, but the statement of a few leading facts will prove more to a judicious observer, than whole volumes of fine-spun reasoning. By the latest statistical reports, it has been ascertained that Great Britain averages about one hundred and twenty individuals on each square mile, which allows five acres for each, or twenty-seven and a half for a family, each being calculated *on an average* at *five and a half*. If an *agrarian law* were to pass, it is evident that we could raise enough from the ground for our own consumption, if all were alike industrious and capable of agriculture, and if there should be no bad harvests; at the same time we will just observe that the *present division* of land renders it much more productive than it could possibly be under an agrarian distribution, and to prove this it is surely unnecessary to mention all the reasons for this opinion; we need only consider the impossibility of each family keeping a team of horses, or if they did, the extraordinary consumption of food by such a quantity of cattle, who would be for the greatest part of the year unemployed. This, with many other forcible reasons, operates against it, but the point to be established is, that Great Britain could easily maintain double her number of inhabitants, even without importation, with only thirteen acres and three quarters for a family. Two acres under wheat, will average, after deducting the seed for the next season, sixty bushels weighing three thousand six hundred pounds, which will supply upwards of five thousand pounds weight of bread, affording three pounds daily to each individual; half an acre for each family would raise vegetables and potatoes, and the remaining eleven acres would certainly raise cattle for the field, and for the market, besides the cheese and butter, which would assist in the payment of rent, tythes, taxes, &c.—In this account we have not considered the extra produce of pigs and poultry, nor of fruit, &c. &c. all of which would amount to a large quantity, and which, under a general improved system, would tend to encrease the sum total of food. This simple statement, therefore, shews, that under any probable gradual increase of population, our means of meeting it are fully adequate to the necessity of the time, and that our *modern fears* of a too extensive population, are merely founded on idle whim or capricious ignorance.

HONOURABLE INSTANCE OF SELF-DENIAL.

Ribera, the Spanish painter (by way of eminence called *Spagnoletto*), though nurtured in the lap of poverty, was yet early initiated in the old Castilian principles of virtue; having found his way to Rome for improvement in his

art, he was admitted as an academician, under the particular guidance of Francisco de Ribalta, but was obliged to employ part of his time in paintings of a common kind, to gain a paltry subsistence. A Member of the Conclave passing through the streets one day in his coach, observed a poor object in tatters, employed in painting a sign-board for a house of the lowest order; the youth and abject appearance of the artist caught his attention; he ordered his carriage to stop, whilst he contemplated the singular attention with which he pursued his work, and the rays of genius which burst forth through his squalid obscurity.—It was *Il Spagnoletto* earning a few *paolos*, of which he was evidently in the greatest want; the Cardinal calling him to the coach, and having enquired his name and history, directed him to proceed to his palace, where he placed him on his domestic establishment with every facility of pursuing his favourite profession. Though virtuous whilst in extreme poverty, yet the blandishments of ease and affluence operated as a spell on the mind of the young painter, and he soon became a slave to those pleasures, which whilst poor he had despised; but virtue, as well as genius, though clouded for a moment, will yet dart forth from the clouds which overshadow it, and his feelings, though blunted, were yet not subdued; his moments of reflection told him that his honour and his talents were alike in danger, and in a moment of enthusiasm, or rather shall we say of generous virtue, he tore himself from all the *agremens* of his new mode of life; and whilst reassuming his native poverty, found himself restored to his nature, dignity of soul, and independence. His self-denial was afterwards amply rewarded, by the profits and honours which attended his superior excellence in his art.

GEORGE SETHERTON, OR THE POOR AUTHOR.

A TALE, FOUNDED ON FACT.

BY THOMAS NOBLE.

MR. SETHERTON had been an indigent author of rather an eccentric character. He was of a good family, but without any patrimony. With a mind strongly tinctured with love for learning, he had been persuaded early in life to enter into the army. For that purpose he had quitted college when on the point of obtaining a fellowship, at the instigation of a General Officer, whose son honoured him with the title of his friend. Indeed no friendship could be more perfect: the imagination of each was vivid, and although Frederick Walters did not write verses, he admired the compositions of George Setherton. Walters was completely dissipated: wine and women were his continual objects:—Setherton loved both very well, but mingled more refinement in his attachments; the social glass was at once his theme and his inspirer; but among his mistresses he was rather a Tibullus than a *debauché*. It happened that during their residence in a county town, in which their regiment was quartered, a pair of dark eyes shone with such lustre through the shop window of a dealer in ribbons and gauzes, that both the friends at the same instant seemed to have caught the gaze of a basilisk. "By God! what a lovely girl, "George?" exclaimed Walters. "An angel! "by all that's good!" cried Setherton.—"By "all that's bad, I hope not!" returned his friend, and entered the shop immediately. Setherton followed; and they soon found the want of more millinery articles than they had ever heard named before. The object which had attracted them was truly lovely. Her eyes had a sensibility in them that shewed a mind above her station: she seemed to descend to the looks becoming her employment, in assuming the most bewitching smiles, and in permitting her musical accents to rise scarcely above a whisper, as she returned answers to the questions of her customers. A simplicity, which appeared to be studied, not so much to heighten, as to render more conciliating the dignity of her figure, made her peculiarly interesting. An aged woman sat in the shop likewise, and rose to attend to the young officers; but the lovely maiden, very much to their satisfaction, pressed forwards; and by the name of mother desired her in an affectionate tone of voice, "not to disturb herself, for "that she would wait upon the gentlemen." Young military men are never at a loss for topics of conversation with the fair sex. The

old lady was delighted with them, and the young one received their compliments, their *bon-mots*, and their raillery, with the most seductive condescension of conscious beauty *affecting* to be *unaffected*. They called again, and found means to increase the interest which their vivacity and politeness had created. They called separately; each beginning to desire that the whole profit of this interest might become his own. Walters saw in the young milliner all that he had ever conceived to be desirable in woman: Setherton beheld every charm, that poets have deified or his own imagination depicted, realized in this beautiful object. All the most ardent protestations that desire could suggest flowed from the lips of the former: all the softest admiration of the most delicate passion from both the lips and the pen of the latter. It was difficult to say which she preferred. She heard the fervid oaths and inflamed declarations of Walters with a sort of retiring modesty, which redoubled his oaths and rekindled his declarations: to the sighs and madrigals of Setherton she listened with such gentle attention as rendered her to him, at least, the highest goddess in the mythological firmament. Neither of our suitors was jealous of the other, although each might be said to have some reason: but this was not the first woman whom they had both loved, and whose extensive favours had left neither to repine at the good fortune of the other. Yet in this amour, even while they laughed and chatted on the subject, a certain wish for preference was secretly clinging to the bosom of each.

The affair had been in this situation for some weeks, when Walters was obliged to request leave of absence, and attend the death-bed of an uncle in Yorkshire. He had been contracted to the daughter of this uncle from her birth, by the private agreement of the two fathers. She was about ten years old, and so earnest was her parent for the match, that, during his illness, he was continually desiring the ceremony might be performed before he died, although the consummation was impossible. Walters could have no objection to give his uncle this satisfaction, as he had always considered himself as the husband of his little cousin; and had confirmed the contract of their parents by repeated promises, since he had been of age. A dispensation was with some difficulty obtained; and soon after his arrival the ceremony was privately performed at his uncle's bed-side. He continued to reside in the mansion, which was to become his own at the death of this relation; an event that did not take place for some time.

When Setherton acquainted the lovely milliner with the reason of his friend's absence, a faint symptom of vexation for a moment gave an unusual pallor to her countenance; but she soon recovered herself, and paid more than usual attention to a sonnet which he had particularly addressed to her. She now became more lavish of her encouragement; and the poetical lover began to perceive that something of a more pressing nature, but not easily disclosed in rhymes, might probably have a chance of success. An explanation, therefore, very speedily took place, and it was not without some chagrin that he heard his charmer declare that the *denoüement* of this intrigue must resemble that of all comedies, and become a *nœud de marriage*. This did not enter at all into his ideas: he had expected his goddess to be to him what Venus was to Anchises, and Diana to Endymion: he had no ambition of being raised to the immortal happiness of never ending matrimony. When, however, he found that there were no means of obtaining any less quantity than a *life-full* of that pleasure he had been so ardently contemplating, he began to curse his folly in having trifled so long with so inexorable a beauty: resolved never to see her again: wrote fifty farewel stanzas in praise of her virtue; and, in a poem of double that length, pronounced her to be Juno girded with the cestus of Venus: ventured to call, merely to know whether she admired his compositions, and—married her three days afterwards!

Nothing could equal the madness with which Walters read the letter of Setherton, announcing this marriage, except the reproaches with which he answered it. "Was this friendship? "Was this that more than brotherhood that "had subsisted between them? Had they not "sworn to hunt pleasure in pairs; and did he "think thus to deprive him of a participation "in the game?—'She would not submit!' a "pretty excuse! He might have waited till "his return: he would himself have won the "citadel, and let in his confederate. Paper "pellets were well enough for field-day exer- "cise, but when the day of battle arrived, the "bayonet was the most certain weapon. He "was sorry that he had ever called such a poor "sneaking scribbler his friend; and swore, "that he had resolved to cuckold him or shoot "him; and therefore desired to know whether "he chose to meet him himself, or to let his "wife meet him?" Setherton was a soldier, and pertinaciously correct in his attention to

the laws of honour. He saw that his hand must be raised against his benefactor, and he shuddered at the idea: but he saw in that benefactor a man whose language cancelled all past obligations, and, at the same time, threatened his future ruin. His answer was long: his vindication explicit; and he never so clearly perceived the beauty of justice and virtuous resolution as now that they furnished him with arguments in defence of his conduct. His conclusion, however, was that of a soldier; he interpreted the letter of Walters as a challenge, which he accepted, and left the time, place and weapons to the challenger. They met a few days after; they fired together, were both wounded: the ball passed through the heart of Walters, and he expired instantly. The wound of Setherton was slight, yet sufficient to preclude any possibility of escape, a guard attended his sick chamber, and prevented his wife from performing many of those duties which affection dictated. This was not, perhaps, the severest of evils to Mrs. Setherton: she wept, and her tears were sincere, for she beheld the ruin of her husband in this event. She perceived that she had thrown away her only portion, her beauty, upon one who would no longer have the means to give it that splendour which it could receive from gold alone. Her prudence had been correct in all its measures: she had determined to marry a gentleman at any rate: Walters had appeared the very object of her long nourished plans; but as she feared that his situation in life might be too lofty for her designs to reach, she suffered his friend to partake in her attentions. In the friend of such a man as Walters she calculated upon a long train of riches and honours: prosperity and happiness seemed the certain objects of her designs, but ruin and misery were the consequences. The duel was in reality as fatal to Setherton as to Walter: in it perished all his prospects in the profession to which he belonged. Those persons who were strangers to either party, sincerely pitied him; those who knew his circumstances, ridiculed his chivalry, and some condemned his ingratitude; while others, and those not a few, thought he ought to have let his wife have given Walters a less murderous meeting. But, of all who heard it, none were so decided in their opinion as the immediate relations of the deceased. Immense estates would be lost to them by that death which broke his marriage contract with his cousin; and left her at liberty, when at age, to dispose of her hand and her possessions to a stranger. Their vengeance was therefore implacable.

The provocation which Setherton had received, was, however, so great, that his judges could not but acquit him; but he soon felt that the army was no longer a situation in which he could have any expectation of success. The death of Walters had also strongly affected him, and recalled those more serious intentions which had been the objects of his studies at college. He sold his commission, and endeavoured to obtain orders; but here the crime of blood was his reproach, and the bishop, at the instigation of the Walters' family, refused to pollute his sacred hands with so defiled an animal. His only resource for maintenance was now become authorship; the emoluments of which were very unsatisfactory to the views and inclinations of Mrs. Setherton. With a mind delicate and indolent, to which the beauties of poetry, and the refinements of elegant expression were peculiarly adapted, he groaned beneath the ponderous drudgery to which his wants condemned him. Neither genius, nor that exalted judgment which is entitled taste, were demanded of him; but a knowledge of the whims of the multitude, and that sublime acquaintance with books, or rather the names of books, which forms so great a part of the wisdom of the present age; I mean, catalogue erudition. He was to collate, not to compose; to take the scissars and paste brush in hand; to select passages among hundred-weights of waste volumes; and, sticking them on blue paper leaves, unite them with a sort of cobweb-work spun from his own imagination. If he had condescended to have purchased some of the two-penny magazine portraits which have served according to the necessities of these monthly caterers of literature for Wat Tyler or Henry V.; Calvin or Pope Pius; Mahomet or Julius Cæsar; Cardinal Wolsey or Oliver Cromwell; if he had purchased such things as these indeed, and entered upon the *curious and mysterious science of old-book illumination*, he might have looked as big and as wise as that prince of the *illuminantes*, Mr. Edward Jefferies himself:—strutted as much, and talked as much about lords, without bowing quite so low to them. But poor Setherton was a very bad hand even at plain book-making; the lowest branch of that modern art, in which scissars and paste have supplanted the pen: and when once he had the task assigned him of abridging a folio, he (Lord help him!) took ink, pens, and writing paper, and wasted many weeks in compressing the sense and extracting the marrow of the original; while the *honest* bookseller who employed him, had in

the meantime tried the skill of the scissars, which require no more the direction of thought than the book-mill of Laputa,—and, behold! the abridgment was in the hands of the public before Setherton had got through fifty pages!

Such, for many years, was the life of a man whom circumstances had doomed to be an author for bread. His mind wore itself away in pursuits for which it was not calculated. When he sometimes attempted such original compositions as might have gained him *credit*, and have rescued him from the fangs of his tyrannical employers, his *domestic* miseries interrupted him, and crushed his speculations. Mrs. Setherton was herself not the least of his grievances. She was ill-suited for the wife of an author. Of a *poor gentleman*, she had no idea: in the substantive *gentleman*, she had always understood the adjective *rich:* and she now felt herself as far below her level, as she had hoped to rise above it. A *poor* author is, in truth, infinitely lower than a bookseller's shop-man; and a printer's devil is certainly as superior to the poor wretch, (to whom he comes with a thundering knock, and "more copy:—press stands still!") as Beelzebub, prince of the devils, is to the lowest sinner in the bottomless pit!!!

A clergyman of Berkshire, of the name of Ruthman, was the only patron which the wretched Setherton found. For some years this real christian gave him an asylum in the parsonage house; and, by assigning him some slight literary employment, took off the odium of obligation. At the dwelling of this worthy minister, the poor author completed his first original work; and, by the benevolence of his patron, was enabled to consign it to the press himself. It was on an interesting topic, and possessed that delicacy of judgment which is the characteristic of cultivated genius. Mr. Ruthman introduced it to the notice of the literati of his acquaintance; it was highly spoken of in the first circles; and, as it was so much countenanced, the very reviewers relaxed their ebon frowns, and deigned to smile upon it. But, alas! poor Setherton had caught the omnipotent regard of the reviewers too late!—Their vivifying approbation was like the sunbeams on a blasted elm: he was in the last stage of a rapid decline, when he read their commendations! "This is an assurance," he exclaimed, "that I shall not leave my wife "and children wholly destitute: this praise is, "indeed, doubly sweet, as it fixes a value on "the only exertion I have been able to make "for their welfare!"—He shortly after expired, leaving four children with Mrs. Setherton, three of whom were daughters. A respectable bookseller gave a handsome sum for the copyright of the successful work, and for the manuscript of various other pieces, which had been composed during broken intervals of toil. This supply enabled the mother to place the two youngest girls as apprentices with a mantua-maker: the eldest had been for some years with a sister of Mr. Setherton's, and the boy became the particular care of Mr. Ruthman, who fixed him in a large school, in his own neighbourhood, as a sort of under-usher.

On the fate or conduct of this unfortunate man, I forbear any comments. The paths of original literature are not for the poor. Let the wretch, who starves while he writes, submit to bear the burdens of the mercenary speculator in *reading articles;* but let him not aspire to the freedom of thought, or the honour of inventive genius, lest the bread which he so hardly earns should crumble away beneath his hand; and the gigantic grasp of corporeal want should compel his mind to stoop to lower and still lower submission!

THE DEATH OF OSSIAN.

AN ATTEMPT AT AN IMITATION OF OSSIAN.

Dost thou delight in Songs?—OSSIAN.

CHEERFUL were the steps of the traveller over the heath, though the wind of the storm whistled in his lofty plumes, and the red lightning played on his bossy shield. He hummed the song of the deeds of the days that were passed, as he shook the cold rain from his hair. Many were the years that had rolled away on the rapid course of time, since the traveller had seen the walls of Selma, and his heart bounded as he drew near them—but his steps echo lonely

and hollow in the halls of Fingal, and the heart of the traveller saddens at the sound, as the clouds of the shower darken the bright face of the sun of the spring.

Traveller.—Where dwell the mighty now? Why am I here alone? When last I trod thy courts, oh! Selma, Fingal the renowned (Fingal, who was to the foes of his people, like the rushing of a hundred streams; but when the day of strife was over, was mild as the tear of pity, which trembles in the eye of beauty;) spread the generous feast, and his race flourished around him like the youthful oaks around the monarch of the wood. Thou wast here Ossian, chief of a thousand bards, and friend of my soul; and Oscar, hero of youth, whose eager glance sought the downcast eyes of Malvina, soft beam of beauty; and the heroes of Fingal shone near her, like the green sparkling stars, round the queen of night. The bards raised the joy of grief, or sent back the soul to the deeds of other times. Sweet was their song, but thine, oh! Ossian! excelled them all. You sang the deeds of heroes, the strife of glory. The glow of valour flushed the cheeks of the heroes, their hands sought their swords, and half drew them from their sides—they arose from their seats, and reached towards their bossy shields. But then thy song was of love; of a star of beauty which had shone, but some storm had darkened its bright face; tears filled our eyes, and their flowing extinguished the flame of glory. Then you sang the joys of love, of two young hearts, burning with one pure flame. The eyes of Oscar and Malvina met, and spoke: the lovers sighed, soft as the gale of the evening of summer, when sweets load its breath. Thy voice trembled, oh! Ossian, as you sang, for your thoughts were of Everallin. The son of Marni arose troubled from his seat, and sighing, deeply as the wind in the cave of the rock, he left the hall, for his memory returned to the form of the lovely, to the faded blossom of Oithona. Pleasant were those days; they float on the soul like the blast of the evening of autumn, when it moans among the withered leaves, and sleep steals softly o'er the eyes of the thoughtful. But where are ye now? Daughter of Morven, where are the mighty? hunt they the bounding roes? or mix they in the field of war? Tell me maiden, for this arm falls not lightly on the foes of Selma's heroes.

Maiden.—The sons of the feeble now possess the lands of the renowned. Fingal, king of spears, reigns in his airy hall. Oscar hunts the roe amidst the clouds of heaven, and Malvina comes on the gale that wafts pleasure to the hearts of love. Ossian alone, king of bards, stands like an oak which a hundred storms have battered in vain. When the morning beamed, I led him (for though his soul shines with the light of the song, his eyes are dark) to where the mossy bank rises by the softly gliding stream, beneath the spreading arms of the mighty oak. There sits the bard, and sings the songs of other times.

Traveller.—Hark! I hear his harp, it brings to my memory the joys that are past. Yonder sits the chief of the fields of old, and leans upon his harp—but 'tis not he that touches its strings, it is the passing breeze.

Maiden.—Perhaps Malvina floats on that breeze, and gives soft notes to the harp of the bard; for dear was the voice of Cona to Malvina, and dear the sound of his harp.—But see the hero sleeps—ah! no 'tis death—his soul has joined the mighty in their airy halls—the oak is blasted by the lightning of the storm!

Traveller.—And art thou fallen, mightiest tree of the desert? The traveller passed, and saw thee in thy beauty—thy leafy head towered above thy neighbours, blooming were thy branches, and lovely thy shoots which surrounded thee, but thou art fallen, and soon shall thy place be bare. I was dear to thee, Ossian, in the days of my youth; and I said to myself when I was in the land of strangers, and fought against the king of the world, "My "deeds shall not float away on the breeze of "to-day, like the deeds of the feeble and un-"known, for Ossian, chief of bards, Ossian, "friend of my soul, shall sing their praise; "and my name shall be familiar to the sons of "other times." But thou hast failed, sweet voice, and thy sound is no more; thou art a beam which shone brightly, but the mists of eve have extinguished thy brightness. And thou, oh! Ossian, who gave the deeds of heroes to the sons of the future, who shall sing thy praise? Shall the stones, with their mossy heads, which tell to the hunter, "here lies "Ossian, king of spears," be the only voice to bear thy name to other times? Oh! no. For when the stranger shall hear thy songs of Fingal and of his heroes, he shall ask "who it "was sang the deeds of the mighty?" Who, but Ossian, voice of Cona. He shall hum thy songs as he travels o'er the heath, and say, "Then sweet was that voice." He shall tell to the sons of his strength, *who* best sang the prowess of warriors, and the song of the maid of love: and the name of Ossian shall be dear to the hero, as the shout of battle, and loved by the kind of heart as the tear of pity or the smile of beauty.

W. R.

DRAMATIC STRICTURES.

IT is remarkable that the English nation, celebrated throughout Europe, for the manly seriousness of its disposition, the cool reflecting bent of its mental capacities, and, therefore, to all appearance, more likely to delight in the representation of tragedy, is the only one that cannot boast a living tragic author of *superior* excellence, whilst it abounds with comic writers of all descriptions. This deficiency in the chief branch of the drama may be attributed to two widely different causes: the one a public, the other a private cause. All the enjoyments of life, it is well known, are heightened by, if not derived from, contrast. Wealth, regarded with indifference by the man who is born to a large fortune, is esteemed as a blessing by him who has pined in want. Health, the very thought of which is foreign to our minds during the absence of illness, is deemed the most precious jewel of existence by the unhappy being who groans on the bed of sickness. Contrast is the magic wand, which, in the hands of the creator, turns pain into increased pleasure, and sorrow into livelier joy. According to this reasoning, it is not astonishing that a nation supposed to be naturally grave, should seek for relaxation and amusement in pieces that do not awe or terrify, but cheer the soul, and consequently that comic talent should flourish under the fostering hand of encouragement, whilst tragic genius withers in neglect and obscurity. The second cause is more secret, but equally powerful. It is the triumph of private interest over public good. It is that which enables the monopolists of the stage, supported by the venality of its managers, to maintain their ground, however unjustly usurped, against every new pretender to fame, and in defiance of the force of general opinion. "But," it will be asked, "is this the reason "why we have no eminent tragic author? it "cannot be; the first you gave must be the "true one: tragedy is not liked; for if it were, "and the managers were really as interested as "you represent them to be, they would, un-"doubtedly, for their own advantage, patron-"ize the sons of Melpomene." Patience, impartial readers, to form a hasty conclusion is not always to form a just one. The fallacy of the first reason will appear plain, when you reflect on the crowded houses which Shakspeare's *tragedies*, *Venice Preserved*, *The Revenge*, and even a modern bard's production (neglected *whilst he lived*, but acted *after his death*), the *Curfew* have collected. Was the reception which these *serious pieces* met with, a proof that a British audience delight in comedy alone? "But the tragedies which you "have mentioned, with the exception of one," you will hastily exclaim, for you are not so cool as the nations of the continent take you to be, "were written by men who have long "slept in the grave; their genius is buried "with their bones. If any man possessing the "same unbounded imagination, versatility of "powers, and unerring skill in painting "nature, as our Shakespeare, were now to "arise, the managers would not be blind to "his merits. We are in an enlightened age, "which honours and fosters talent. Let a "a new Milton appear; and what bookseller "will not offer him gladly for his work, at "least half what a Walter Scott receives for "one of his metrical and irregular tales!" To this I will answer, that you may thank Heaven for the darkness of Shakspeare's age, which served to make the brightness of such a luminary more visible; and that such, as you say, is the *enlightened* state of ours, that should a similar phenomenon now arise on the horizon of literature, its radiance would be lost in the blaze of modern universal excellence. I do not reproach the managers with blindness; no; excess of light, excess of knowledge, excess of *attention*, dazzled by the very exertions it makes to discern the respective merits of the brilliant performances of their friends (I mean those dramatic planets that reflect once a year the lustre they borrowed from the French) these are qualities not defects. The manner in which they display them, is fair and honourable, not improper: for is it not fair and honourable, and even a moral and social duty, to be useful to our friends? and the managers certainly never do any thing else. It is unlucky for the public in general, that among those priviledged friends, *no tragic author should be found*, but that they should all have been endowed by nature with powers that tend a different way; as this is *the sole and real* cause why no modern tragedies appear. A privation that springs from so noble a source as friendship will be, and is, patiently borne by the sympathetic good nature of the public.

How long this will endure; how long the tyranny of individuals will be suffered to crush genius in the souls of the present generation, it is impossible for us to decide. We express our feelings on, and our knowledge of, the subject thus freely, because at the moment we were about to continue our comparison of the present state of the French and English stages, we were surprised to find, what had not so forcibly struck us before, that the latter, so long proudly pre-eminent, had of late sunk into an humble imitator of the former. That all the pieces produced as originals (*The World*, we believe, and *The Jew of Mogadore* excepted), were foreigners skilfully disguised under the English dress. That not only the German stage and *Ambigu Comique* had been secretly pillaged, but that the narrow invention of our bards had been compelled to dive for plots and incidents into the works of the oldest writers for the French theatres; probably hoping that the more than hundred years of obscurity in which they had lain, would have never been pierced by the eye of observation, and fully conscious that every thing taken from the French (unless indeed men of war, armies, cannons, or standards) would never meet with a hearty welcome in the land of mental, as well as bodily independance. Thus, whilst our warriors shed their blood to keep our foes from our shores, our dramatic authors kindly introduce and disseminate their writings, which, however altered, cannot be entirely purified from the Gallic opinions they contain, and to conceal which it becomes necessary to heap affected national sentiments together, commonly known by the appropriate appellation of clap-traps. Many who read this article will say, that I attribute the patriotic effusions of our modern authors to a wrong motive; that they really feel what they express; that the love of their country, their Constitution, and their King, directs their pen, and not the wish of obtaining the plaudits of the audience as the reward of their loyalty. I will only observe, that the French dramatic writers are equally skilful and eager in displaying *their veneration* for their own government, and that the compliments that are paid to the excellency of our Constitution, and the benevolence of our Sovereign, are frequently through the same (the names being changed) medium of translation, which, a few months before, flattered our implacable and ambitious foe into a belief that his sway was paternal, and the gratitude of his subjects sincere.

If the pieces translated or imitated from our neighbours, were so superior to the native productions of British genius, as to discourage even emulation, their importation might gratify the taste compelled to feed on foreign delicacies.—But examine the nature of those that have been lately so successful on our stage, and we perceive that, with the exception of *False Alarms*, and *Peter the Great* (the one taken from Montfleury, the other from Bouilly), and *Time's a Tell Tale*, altered by Mr. H. Siddons from a German play that had already appeared in English, under the title of *False Delicacy*, they are all melodramas and farces. Melodramas, sprung from the corruption of the French and German schools, have been rightly represented as monsters, who neither possessed the dignity of tragedy nor the lively wit of comedy: their introduction cannot, therefore, be represented as conducive to the progress of taste. To the translating of farces, we certainly can have no other objection, than that it weakens, if not annihilates the spirit of originality, and by rendering the task of writing for the stage easy, creates a multitude, not of real authors, but of pretenders to the honours of authorship, who crowd the field of literature, close all the avenues to fame, without being able to snatch the wreath to which they vainly aspire, and without allowing those who had been destined to pluck it, to fulfil the ends for which their talents had been given them. What is imitation when it confines itself to the works of man? It is, in fact, the crutch with which lame ambition attempts to ascend the hill of Parnassus.—True genius disdains it; nature, and all its wonders, are at his command; he fixes his glance upon them, assimulates them into new creations, and, proud of his real originality, leaves to posterity the lower employment of copying his beauties and his works.

DETECTOR.

A PEDESTRIAN TOUR THROUGH FRANCE, GERMANY, HOLLAND, SWITZERLAND AND DENMARK.

WRITTEN DURING THE YEARS 1805, 6, *AND* 7.

Hamburgh, May 23, 1805.

MY return is deferred. Notwithstanding the desire I must feel, dearest A—, of re-beholding, after an absence of ten years, the spot where the earliest and happiest part of my life had been spent, I have been induced to abandon the fulfilment of my wishes for some time longer. I advanced as far as Kiel, where I intended to spend only a few days, and then to continue my journey to Husum, when a visit to Professor B—, the day after my arrival, induced me to enter into an engagement, which will probably retain me three years more on the Continent. His pressing solicitations, and the advantageous offers he made me on the part of Count B—, eldest son to the Minister B—, have induced me to accompany this young nobleman in a tour he intends to make through Germany and other parts of Europe. The conditions are too advantageous to be rejected; and if you will add to this circumstance a kind of constitutional, or rather, national predilection for wandering, you will be acquainted with my inducements to this new peregrination.—The character of my companion is, at the same time, so conformable to my own, that it was impossible for me to resist the temptation. We undertook our journey on foot; and this young nobleman, who will one day possess a princely fortune, had already determined on this mode of travelling, before I communicated my opinion as to its utility and pleasure: knowing my sentiments on that head, you will find no difficulty in believing me, that this was another very strong incitement to my acquiescence. The character of my pupil is, in like manner, so amiable; he possesses such various and useful endowments; his desire of instruction is so ardent; he has so much refinement of taste, with such solidity of understanding, that I expect more benefit from his intercourse, than he can possibly acquire from mine. In fact your friend, notwithstanding his experience, years and excursions, stands in more absolute need of a guide, than his youthful companion. This is one of the frolics common in our best of possible worlds; and if we had no other to complain of, the opinion of the majority of its inhabitants would coincide, in this one respect at least, with the sentiments of Leibnitz, Pope, the immortal Pangloss, and other illustrious optimists. However as the all-directing goddess, fortune, who, be it said without arrogance or depreciation, has more influence on the resolves of distinguished mortals, than they will willingly admit, has sent me once more in quest of adventures; I intend to transmit you a faithful account, if I have leisure or whim to examine.

Whilst the Count was making the necessary arrangements for his departure, I employed the time in an excursion into Schleburg and Jutland. An extraordinary transformation has taken place, during the last twenty years, in all the Danish Provinces. This amelioration is universally ascribed by the natives to the late Count Bernstorff, father of the present Minister for Foreign Affairs. When that distinguished Statesman was placed at the head of the Administration, the country was in a state of disorganization and misery, not to be imagined. The Court was continually engaged in some wild and impracticable project relative to the army, finances and internal œconomy; whilst the courtiers rendered every idea of reformation extravagant, in consequence of their rapacity and ignorance. The unavoidable disorder in the finances, together with the weakness and vanity of the Government, contributed to enrich a swarm of adventuring projectors from other countries. The facility, with which adventurers obtained the first offices in the State, gave rise to a proverbial expression, that if a fellow were good for nothing else, he would be qualified for a Danish Counsellor, and make his fortune in Copenhagen. Under such circumstances, you will form some idea of the kind of patriotism which prevailed. Unceasing cabals, intrigues, and revolutions, agitated the Ministry; and the fate of the unfortunate *Struensee* affords a tragical example of the vengeance with which integrity and merit were then persecuted.

A total revolution, in every branch of the Administration, has since occurred; partly through the patriotic exertions of Bernstorff, and partly through the extraordinary occurrences of our time. I never, indeed, remember any circumstance which afforded me higher gratification than the enthusiastic veneration with

which every class of inhabitants pronounced the name of that departed Statesman. Several years have elapsed since his death; but I never heard the Danes speak without the strongest marks of feeling and gratitude of his services. I have frequently heard them exclaim, in consequence of some supposed grievances they laboured under: "Ah, if Bernstorff were alive, "this would not have taken place!"

Whatever degree of merit should be attributed to that Minister, and however just the veneration may be which the inhabitants express for his memory, the revolution considerably contributed to the fortunate change which has taken place in this country. The annihilation of the French, Dutch, and Spanish commerce has, by making the Danes the carriers of the produce of those several countries, introduced a degree of opulence among the middling and lower classes, and a proportionate degree of independance and amelioration. This has removed that excessive inequality, which existed between these classes and the order of the nobility; and the latter would now be laughed at, if they attempted to enforce their former insolent pretensions and exclusive privileges.—They have the good sense, however, to accommodate themselves freely, and with grace, to this unavoidable change; and several of them are remarkable for their merit and popularity.

The Danes are, nevertheless, far behind their neighbours in civilization and industry. They are, in general, a heavy, melancholy people; and entertain a truly ridiculous opinion of the resources of their government and country.—Their manners are unsocial and ungraceful; and their amusements impress one with no very favourable notion of their moral and intellectual refinement. The harshness and dissonance of their language perfectly correspond with the vulgarity of their deportment and the uncouthness of their appearance. The horrid oaths with which they animate their conversation, and their excessive vociferation, render their intercourse the most nauseous I have witnessed. Their brutal indulgence in the use of spirituous liquors, and their addiction to play, are marked and disgusting traits in their character; and, after all the observations I have been able to make, they are the last people with whom I would chuse to spend my life.—More on the same subject in my next.—I am, &c.

SPECULATION.

"——— and give to airy nothing
"A local habitation and a name!"

THE "*magic of a name*" has a much greater effect upon the world in general, than what the world is disposed to allow; yet that which they would deny in theory is completely established by every day practice. This observation is fully verified by the new word *speculation*—new at least in its modern application. "Because I plunder with a single ship," said a pirate to Alexander, "I am called *a rob-*"*ber*, whilst you, who are at the head of an "army, are *a conqueror*." So at the present day, the paltry dog who runs up a score at the alehouse, or the necessitous mechanic, who refuses to pay his baker's bill because he is unable, are kicked out of company, or sent to a jail, whilst the vacant fop of fashion, who leaves his coach-maker's or taylor's bill unpaid, is called *a dashing dog*; and the man of straw, who talks of millions, who takes loans in his own name with other people's money, and who forms contracts for more pounds than he possesses pence, is called *a speculator*.

That spirit of enterprize, which prompts Englishmen to be prodigal of their persons, no doubt prompts them also to be prodigal of their money; but the extraordinary contrast of wary circumspection, and of unguarded confidence, in this disposal of their money, is not unworthy of notice. If application is made to a monied man to borrow a sum, the very offer acts as a powerful astringent on his hand and purse, and a whole junto of lawyers must investigate the securities, and prepare parchments upon parchments, before a single guinea can be drawn from the strong box; yet if any plausible speculator, with a common knowledge of arithmetic, and of the routine cant and business of the alley, steps forward boldly, waits upon the minister, and makes proposals *for the loan*—hey presto! forward rush the monied men, eager for a slice, all pressing their cash on that fortunate individual, who has offered the *lowest bidding* in the consols, with the hopes of a large bonus. Yet this extraordinary confidence is

not confined to the money market alone; the *mercantile man* who would refuse to *lend a guinea* to his brother, will yet trust a speculator with his goods. This requires no proof, but *has been* sufficiently elucidated by the facility with which American speculators have been supplied with goods to an immense amount, not only in London, but in the different manufacturing towns. To enumerate the different sums is indeed not necessary, if it were possible; but the returned bills and consequent bankruptcies, in Manchester, Birmingham, and Leeds, sufficiently attest the fact. The publicity, the fancied importance derived from a loan contract, acts like a magic spell, not only upon the public, but on the speculator himself; money pours into his coffers from day to day, whilst his stipulated payments are at distant dates, and the extraordinary, and almost unhoped for, overflow in his cash account produces a *plethora* of good fortune. The redundance of his financial system acts sympathetically on that of his mind, and the soul dances in a gay delirium, 'midst routs, villas, bonuses, scrip and lottery contracts; agreeably interspersed with the checque books and mahogany counters of Lombard-street, and the bows, smiles, and promises of the treasury. Few men can calmly bear up under the weight of so much good fortune, and money in their eyes soon loses its real value:—what are *thousands?*—to be given perhaps for a paltry villa, when the purchaser, like an ancient enchanter, can perform the whole operation by a nod of his head at Garraway's. Where can be the harm of playing in the alley with a few loose thousands, where success will ensure a fortune, and where the bad luck of to-day may be compensated by the good luck of to-morrow?—But who will lend money to *a gamester?*—No one in his senses—and yet many wary citizens will trust their money in the hands of men, who every day meet with temptations to act in this manner, and of whom it is to be feared, that few indeed are able to withstand, either the force of the temptation, or the influence of example.—What then is the *secret* which produces this apparent contradiction, and shuts the eyes of half the world to the risk they run?—'tis simply a name! The poet tells us, indeed, that "call the rose by any other name, yet still it "will smell as sweet." Here, however, the effect is different; for, soften down the harsh term of "*gambling in the Alley*," for "*speculating in the funds*," and the operation is performed. Undoubtedly, it is the confidence, the *mutual* confidence of monied men and merchants, which forms the principal support of British commerce and of British exertion, which not only makes this country the storehouse of the world, but also enables England to be the great focus, whose stimulating rays penetrate to the most distant part of the globe, and prompt its inhabitants to honest industry; yet this confidence may be carried beyond the limits of prudence, until the injudicious and indiscriminate credit attached to the showy and dashing speculator (having *for once* gone too far) *may* and *will*, produce a distrust, baneful to the interests of the community, and as distinct from liberal circumspection as the bright rays of the meridian sun from the nocturnal scintillation of the glow-worm! Mankind are prone to extremes; and *either* extreme, in the case now considered, would be hurtful. It is, therefore, simply to call the timely attention of our fellow-citizens to a calm consideration of their own and country's interest, that publicity is given to this essay; and without any invidious retrospect to passing events, or from any desire to gratify private malignity by prejudging a case, which certainly, *on all sides*, requires the strictest investigation.

FASHIONABLE ROMANCES.

Mr. Editor,

HAVING come lately to town—no matter when—on private business of my own—no matter what—and taken lodgings in a narrow court—no matter where—I found some tattered manuscripts laying on a shelf, which my landlady said belonged to a *great author*, who had been my predecessor in this *elevated situation*. They seem to contain hints and sketches for common use, and as they may be useful to young adventurers in *modern* literature, I send you a few tattered extracts (which seem to have been the preparature for a *new romance*) for your Literary Magazine.

Quiz.

MEMORANDUM.—To procure an old Court Calendar, and take out a few old lords and dowagers—there is no occasion to *pick them*, but must be careful that they are sufficiently acid. Stew them for some time in an old castle, stirring them up at times with a giddy young creature, that is wiser than them all; then bring them to town, and let them settle—set them on again, adding an ensign of the guards, a little spice of a city grocer, and a lawyer or two, but keep them from boiling over by a dash now and then of sentiment or morality. If they are not seasoned enough, must add a few city cousins with airs and graces; then take out the ensign and giddy girl, and lay them in a dish by themselves; if the others are too hot, set them by till they cool.

Memorandum—I will suppose that my heroine (with no other fortune than the embroidered mantle, in which she was exposed to all the pelting of the pitiless storm, and the sealring, which, like the talisman of eastern tales, is to lead her to affluence and high-titled lineage) may have arrived in London, and wishing to derive *some* benefit from the gratuitous lessons of the *Sunday school*—let me see, am I not guilty of an anachronism? 1790 from 1807 leaves just 17—just right, the very age for an heroine—well, wishing to derive some benefit from the gratuitous lessons of the Sunday school, determines to write a book! Some of her first sheets being printed off, she goes at a late hour to the dreary printing-office, in some dreary alley of the Row, with more copy. The night was sombre and frigorific, the brilliant scintillations of the erratic orbs of Heaven as well as its stationary luminaries, were obtunded by the murky clouds, whose sable conglomeration condensed into inspissated darkness, and obnubilated by fuliginous vapours, served like a foil to the diamond, to give a more contrasted splendour to the glare of confectionary illuminations, which shed their bright refulgence on the snow white encrustations of the mirth-inspiring twelfth-cake. *Ermantrude*, with slow steps advancing from the Strand, approached the City gate. In her infancy, she had heard sad tales of woe of the Scottish rebels, and of their bodyless heads having grinned for years over the gloomy portal; recollecting that her outer garment, when found upon the common, had been part of an old Tartan plaid. "Shades of my fathers," exclaimed she, "perhaps—oh, perhaps some "of your relations may"—"*have been hang*-"*ed*," she would have added: when looking forward, her attention was caught by a glimmering light. Supposing at first that it might be the paper lamp of some old woman roasting her apples under the awful shade of St. Dunstan's, she advanced without much trepidation, but soon perceived that the light had a progressive approximating motion. Filled with doubt and terror, she entered the darksome arch-way, when the light rapidly approaching her, she felt a sudden shock, and the light was extinguished! A shrill but faultering voice faintly articulated "watch!"—The watchman came, and the seeming mystery was unravelled: an ancient fair-one having been to a gossipping in the City, had made such good use of *the glasses*, that her spectacles were of but little service to her, and her friends having supplied her with a lanthorn, not to prevent her from running against others, but to prevent others from running against her, she had found herself so much incommoded by the narrowness of the arch-way, as to fall against our heroine, and extinguish her light.

The crowd, which soon assembled, obliged our heroine to make a retrogade movement into the kennel, whose impure streams now flowed half across the street; and a carriage passing, by the rotatory circumambient motion of its wheels, raised a *jet d'eau* around her, through which she appeared like the fair *Sabrina* when clothed with sedge; or like *Lodona*, whom Pope has sung, as dissolving in pearly drops into the river Lodon.

With wet feet, and a palpitating heart, she passed through all the horrors of Fleet-street; when the Obelisk, with its four lamps, shewed her she was in the vicinity of the *haunted house*. Horror and cold now shook every limb, and she was obliged *to recruit her exhausted spirits*, by getting her friendly pocket companion filled at that hospitable mansion at the corner of the market place.

Slowly ascending Ludgate-Hill, she found herself within the precincts of the cathedral of the sainted Paul, had advanced as far as the Goose and Gridiron, and was proceeding with shivering footsteps towards the trunk-maker's, when the tree, seen faintly through the gloom, seemed to shed a darker horror o'er the scene, and a hollow blast of wind rushing along, obliged her to retrace her footsteps, until half-blinded by the rain, which then fell in torrents, she received a violent contusion by running against Carrington Bowles's corner. Recovering from her alarm, she again proceeded, and after some time feeling her way through the dark passages, whose lamps *had been* lighted, reached the entrance of the printing-house.

She well knew her way led through winding

lobbies and up winding stair-cases, then recommending herself to all the muses, she ventured to ascend;—shrill whistling winds assailed her on every side, she wished for a light, but recollecting that it would be blown out in this temple of the winds, her regret soon ceased—she arrived at the door of the garret, but no light within shewed that it was tenanted by mortal.—Tapping lightly, a hollow voice said or seemed to say—"Walk in and see the lions!"—"Heaven defend me," said Ermentrude, "What and who! art thou?" The same hollow voice again resounded, "I am only the "Printer's Devil!!!"

THE ARBITRATOR.—No. XII.

THEATRICAL CONTRARIES.

What then remains but, after past annoy,
To take the good vicissitude of joy;
To thank the gracious Gods for what they give,
Possess our souls, and, while we live—to live!—*Dryden.*

THE business of arbitration is really extremely arduous, and by no means agreeable. It is to examine without counsel, and to judge without jury; and though the contending parties are to be supposed as pledged to abide by the decision of their arbitrators, their acquiescence is too often given with reluctance rather than thankfulness. Sometimes, indeed, there may be cause for such dissatisfaction. If the arbitrator is suspected either of incompetency or partiality, or if, as Mr. Burke has described one, he is a man who, in settling the litigated claim to a fish-pond, would, while he awarded the water to his friend, allow the mud to his opponent, then is the arbitrator unfit to adjust the difficulty he was called upon to decide.

Let it be hoped, that I shall not be found to belong to either of the descriptions of arbitrators now mentioned; yet who, as the adage says, *who shall determine where doctors have disagreed?* This world of ours seems to abound only with contention. What with the war of politics, the war of polemics, the war of opinion of all kinds, the war of criticism, and the war of theatricals, the peaceably-disposed individual scarcely knows what to think or how to act, where to move or what to say. Ours is, indeed, a curious age. We have anti-men, and hardly any else, of all sorts,—anti-theologians, anti-monarchists, anti-philosophers, anti-jacobins; and we have critics and satirists and censors, in every department of society, as formidable as innumerous. From the lofty Knights of Edinburgh to the humble Scouts of Cobbett, there is no position that has not been assailed, there are no passes which seem unoccupied. It is this state of things, however, which gives to *arbitration* the interest of novelty.

The case which has lately attracted my attention, and which I notice rather for its oddity than importance, is now pending, in the Court of Thespis, between *The Monthly Mirror* and *The Satirist*, alias *Monthly Meteor*. Our Mirror, it appears, is a Sheridanite; while the Meteor, characteristically enough, is an Anti-Sheridan. The Mirror, much as his attention has been occupied by Sirs Phillips and Carr, has found time to eulogise the present Management of Drury Lane Theatre; and The Satirist, uniformly anxious to deserve the distinction of being "a good hater," unceremoniously assails the dramatic Commander in Chief.

COURT OF THESPIS.

Satirist versus Mirror.

Satirist.—"At Drury Lane the campaign was opened by Mr. Thomas Sheridan, Commander in Chief, supported by those distinguished officers, Messrs. Graham and Wroughton. *This transfer of command*, however, *has not* as yet *produced any* sensible *difference in the plan of operations:* the same *pitiful system of economy* still prevails, and *the ranks are as thin* as ever. To attempt any thing with *such weak forces* evinces, however, at least that the Commander is not deficient in *one requisite* of generalship—*self-confidence.*"

Mirror.—"We are *happy* to see this noble theatre [meaning the building called Drury Lane Theatre] open under *circumstances*, with

respect to its *prosperity*, which seem to promise well. Two advertisements have appeared, signed 'R. Peake, Treasurer,' which announce a *very just alteration*, &c. and a *commendable* improvement in the *board of management*, &c. &c. To these advantages of *prudence* and good order we have the pleasure to observe, *at the head* of the management, Mr. THOMAS SHERIDAN; a man *from whose taste and sense we augur much benefit to the public amusement*, while the regard, even to *affection* for him, *which his conciliating and gentlemanly manners have* long and universally *inspired in the profession*, *will* without doubt *insure* a ready and cheerful *obedience to all the suggestions of his enlightened mind*. With this fair prospect, the company," &c. &c.

Having given a complete and impartial statement of the pleadings, on both sides, two or three questions naturally arise, and demand our attention.

Has, or has not, the "transfer of command," by which THOMAS SHERIDAN was placed "at the head of the Management" of Drury Lane Theatre, "produced any sensible [what does The Satirist mean when he talks of *sensible* difference?] difference in the plan of" its "operations?"

Does the former "pitiful system still prevail;" or, do "just alterations," with "the advantages of prudence and good order," present "circumstances which seem to promise well?" Are their "forces weak;" or, has "the company began with a fair prospect?"

And, has the aforesaid Thomas Sheridan an "enlightened mind, all whose suggestions insure ready and cheerful obedience;" or is he, on the contrary, only "not deficient in one requisite—*self-confidence*."

Perhaps it will be found, in reviewing the very opposite assertions which have given rise to the preceding queries, that truth, as frequently happens, is not exactly with either of the parties. Without believing that SHERIDAN THE YOUNGER possesses the most "enlightened mind" in this great metropolis, as his panegyrist would intimate, I can still fully admit the effects of "his conciliating and gentlemanly manners;" and I am inclined to infer, in spite of his surly assailant, that "self-confidence" is not the only "requisite" in which he "is not deficient," but that he really is, in many other respects, qualified to superintend dramatic concerns. I therefore recommend the merits of this case to the consideration of my readers.

I may, however, have misunderstood the meaning of the contending parties. There are, I am aware, many apparent distinctions without any positive differences. What the Mirror calls *prudence*, perhaps the Satirist defines *pitiful*; where the Satirist considers it difficult *to attempt any thing*, perhaps the Mirror sees only a *fair prospect;* and, though the latter attributes to its friend an *enlightened mind*, the Satirist may, after all, intend to compliment him still more (especially if the great men of this age are comparatively recollected), when it pronounces him *not deficient in self-confidence!!!*

October 21, 1808. *JUSTUS.*

REVIEW OF LITERATURE.

THE CONTRAST.

INCLUDING COMPARATIVE VIEWS OF BRITAIN, SPAIN, AND FRANCE, AT THE PRESENT MOMENT.—BY S. J. PRATT, ESQ.

DOES genius continue to ripen through all the stages of our existence? Is it strong when the body languishes? Is it fervid when the nerves become contracted, and the heart beats with slower pulsations.—Let me answer these suggestions boldly in the affirmative. Let me assert, that genius knows not age, and feels not sickness; that it may add sharpness to sorrow, but is itself unrepressed by sorrow; that it may render the stings of poverty more acute, while it stands forth independent in itself of every human calamity. Homer is said to have been old, and blind, and poor; and Milton composed his immortal poem,

"————though fall'n on evil days,
"On evil days though fall'n, and evil tongues;
"In darkness, and with dangers compass'd round,
"And solitude."

In commencing a critique on Mr. Pratt's poem with such an exordium, I shall be suspected of insinuating that increasing genius and hoar locks are the concomitant characteristics of our long-esteemed and interesting Gleaner. Mr Pratt is certainly growing grey in the labours of literature; and the present off-spring of his muse as certainly contains some passages more vigorous and more brilliant with the fire of genius, than are to be met with in any of his other metrical productions. The sickly effeminacy which palsies many of the beauties of his *Sympathy*, and pervades even the best passages of his other poems, is here less apparent, or rather may be said to give place to more real feeling and more fervent thought. Taken, indeed, as a whole, the composition is undoubtedly weak: it fails in its general impression: the two pieces which Mr. P. has tacked together, are not *two parts* of the same piece: "the "public mind will" never "feel that they assi- "milate," nor even "by way of *Contrast* can "they be brought to bear upon one another."

The first part consists of a short poem, felicitating Lord Shaftesbury on his return to England; it contains a just eulogium on an amiable and benevolent nobleman, but how we are to esteem the philanthropy of an individual as a contrast to the political situations of France or Spain, is a difficult matter to determine. Mr. Pratt does not even insinuate that the happiness enjoyed within "the *ring-fence*" of the Shaftesbury estate, is to be found in every part of England. This extent of nearly *forty miles* is, I fear, a mere *inclosure* of comforts, which seldom are met with, even in England, out of their boundaries; or else Mr. Pratt was himself very much mistaken when he wrote his "*Bread, or the Poor.*" The contrast is, therefore, not of England or Spain to France, but of Lord Shaftesbury's domains to the empire of Napoleon; or rather the *Contrast* seems to have been grafted on the short complimentary poem which forms the first part, with no better rhyme or reason than what may be contained in the following lines:

"E'en views of frail mortality, my Lord,
"To British minds a solace may afford;
"And, France! thy sacrilege, opposed to
"these,
"May teach the softer forms of grief to please.
"Beyond the grave the *Contrast* may extend,
"For Britain guards the ashes of a friend."

These lines immediately follow some slight but beautiful descriptions of the tombs of the Cooper family, and therefore tend more strongly to shew that the author intends that illustrious family as a fair sample of English nobility, opposed to the satellites of the Corsican. That race of men are all dead, I suppose, since the composition of Mr. Pratt's former poem, who let out their farms to overgrown and commercial farmers: those *tyrants in petto*, concealed and nurtured by the customs of speculative avarice, who crushed down the cottages beneath them, and rose upon the ruins of *natural* and *equalizing* agriculture.

The conclusion of the first part consists of the following very elegant simile:

"'Tis thus that heav'n sends bounties from
"above,
"While favour'd mortals its indulgence prove.
"Thus falls its dews on drooping plant and
"flow'r:
"Fraught with abundance thus descends its
"show'r,
"Thus springs the fanning breeze, thus sun-
"beams shine,
"Soft, silent, calm, to mark a hand divine!
"With one uncheck'd, and undiminish'd force,
"The blessings seen—*invisible the source!*"

But before I turn to the second and more general part, I must notice the strange application of the following line to Bonaparte.

"Of half mankind the butcher and the tomb!"

Good Heaven! is that fellow really such a cannibal? "the tomb of half mankind!" Lord have mercy upon us, what a stomach the little animal must have!

Mr Pratt does not name the object of his abhorrence throughout his poem, but apostrophizes the continental dæmon with characteristic allusions that might have a tolerable dramatic effect, but are rather uncouth in a poem where all the suggestions of action are left to the idea of the reader. Thus, in the following passage, where the first person addressed is the Earl of Shaftesbury.

"Pardon the wish—but, oh, may heav'n be-
"stow
"Virtue like thine, to cheer this vale of woe;
"While Health her chaplets round your
"bow'rs shall twine,
"Chaplets—THOU MAN OF BLOOD!—unlike
"to thine."

The plain reader does not readily apprehend the stage effect of this sudden transition, and much of its beauty (for exquisitely beautiful the passage certainly is) expires for want of a clearer and more defined object.

The flame of freedom bursting forth in Spain, is indeed a theme calculated to give energy to the feeblest poetical powers: but on such a subject a feeble genius would swell into bombast; Mr. Pratt, on the contrary, rises with the images of true sublimity, to express his sense of patriotic enthusiasm. These images are in fact not very new, but they possess a brilliancy which will not be easily tarnished, though handled by thousands.

" But ah! what visions, awful and profound,
" Pregnant with happier omens, crowd around;
" What kindling glory bursts upon the sight,
" Fair as when Chaos hail'd the birth of
" light;
" When the *first* sun-beam on the mass was
" shed,
" And utter darkness from the radiance fled;
" Swift as the light'ning's flash, the thunder's
" roll,
" Th' effulgence rushes on the startled soul.
" Lo! as it spreads into more perfect day,
" Exulting myriads bless the expanding ray;
" Pursue th' illumined track their fathers trod,
" Rise to new life, and feel th' inspiring God."

Thus far Mr. Pratt has proceeded with a sublimity which would in vain be sought for in his other works, and which caused me to commence my critique with those suggestions concerning genius; but how will every reader, as well as myself, regret that this beautiful passage should be followed by four lines, which, in comparison with the preceding, present a complete *bathos*, and destroy all its energy. I say in comparison with the preceding lines, because the four lines of themselves contain a very sublime and correct figure, and are bad only by position. After so awful a figure as " the birth of Light," when

—— " *utter darkness from the radiance fled*,"

the following is poor and insipid, though in itself elegant:

" From heav'n, from highest heav'n, descends
" the flame,
" To point and guide the way to generous fame.
" 'Twas thus the pillar'd fire its beam display'd,
" To gild the sacred path that heav'n had
made."

Obscurity has ever been held as a great source of the sublime: but then it should be such a species of obscurity as merely leaves the figures undefined, and the imagination undisturbed to its own suggestions. Mr. Pratt seems to have mistaken this sort of obscurity in a few lines from the passage quoted above, and instead of leaving his imagery in the dark, though " palpable obscure," of the imagination, he has thrown some ideas together in a sort of perplexed and chaotic confusion, where they

——— " upwhirl'd aloft,
" Fly o'er the backside of the world far off."

The passage is rather long, but to shew how dangerous a thing a continued metaphor is for those to ride through who do not sit firm on the Pegasean saddle, I shall venture to transcribe it all.

" But, broad and general while the ruin spread,
" *One generous nation* rose as from the dead;
" E'en from its ashes, as by Heaven's command,
" *In fire it rose*, the *phœnix* of the land!
" Yet, ah! it was not the *fierce meteor's glare*,
" That burns awhile, then dissipates in air;
" 'Twas not the madd'ning *ferment of an hour*,
" Nor meaner struggle for a change of power;
" 'Twas not a *sordid mercenary race*,
" That move to battle with a hireling's pace;
" Not the *plann'd contest* that from party
" springs,
" Not *partial strife* of yet inferior things;
" Nor yet *the multitude's unlicensed rage*,
" That for vile gold on either side engage:
" *No, 'twas the magnet*, which all nature draws
" To one supreme and universal cause,
" *That touches at a thousand points the heart*,
" *Wakes us to bliss* or agonising smart;
" That rocks the cradle where our infants lie,
" *Throbs* in each pulse, and *breathes* in every
" sigh,"

et cetera and *et cetera* again; for I am weary of transcribing the *non-description* and *description* of this thing, that *rises in fire*, that is a *phœnix* and is not a *meteor*, that is not a *ferment*, that is not a *race*, that is not a *contest*: but that is all this time *a magnet*, and a magnet that *rocks a cradle*, and *throbs* and *breathes*, and—*ohe! jam satis!*

Notwithstanding this curious passage, Mr. Pratt's poem is superior to most of the compositions which have hitherto appeared on this subject. In his mention of *Veriatus*, he seems to have been lately dipping into the history of Spain; and to have got hardly deep enough to have explored many of its wonders. The character of *Veriatus* is well drawn; but, who ever heard of

——— " that *imperishable* glow—
" Whose chaplet," &c.

A glow is not *imperishable*, but *inextinguishable*, and has *no chaplets* in its possession.

Dion.

DR. GREGORY'S LETTERS.

SINCE our last Magazine, in which was commenced an account of Dr. Gregory's Letters, we have had time to reconsider their merits, and deliberately to determine to what extent they are really entitled to be reviewed.—We shall not therefore expatiate at length, as we at first designed to do, on the present volumes; but rather content ourselves with such an account of them as, while it inflicts no injustice on their respectable author, may answer all the purposes of general literature. When we say that these volumes are on the whole correctly and elegantly written, and contain many excellent and interesting opinions, we must confess, at the same time, that they are not of such importance, except with reference to the author's reputation, as to call for minuteness of examination and copiousness of detail. They excite, however, a few incidental remarks, and warrant some pleasing quotations.

While ascertaining the causes to which poetry and music alike owe their fascination, Dr. Gregory observes, "I confess *music* appears to approach very near to a mere *pleasure of sense*; and it is perhaps from its connexion with poetry, or rather from its subservience to it, that it has been classed among the superior arts, or those which administer *pleasure to the mind*." "*Poetry*," he adds, at p. 12 of his first volume, "always interests a reader of taste more than prose. The causes of this are the *harmony* arising from the metre or the *rhyme*, and which (without entering into a metaphysical inquiry as to the cause) may be referred to the *same source as* the pleasure which *music* affords."—Here we must seriously dissent from our author. We cannot, indeed, undertake to controvert all those of his positions which appear to us to be unfounded; but, though we must decline so tedious an investigation as many of his decisions might lead us into, we cannot quietly permit him to class poetry among the "mere pleasures of sense." Ideal, or mental, harmony has, we grant, some connexion with that feeling of melody which immediately affects sensation; but, as originating in thought or mind, it is by far superior to it in dignity. One is the music of the senses; while the other, if our illustration may be allowed, is the music of the spheres. Earthly instruments chiefly charm by giving something like realization to our almost inherent conceptions of celestial harmony.

With the following sentence we perfectly coincide. It contains much truth, and, what is not uniformly the character of the author's style, it is also elegantly expressed.—"Perhaps," says Dr. G. "etymology is, in general, a better guide to truth than definition."

The next quotation we are induced to transcribe from feelings of sympathy towards those who are preparing to enter on the vineyard of literature, or who may be destined to succeed both us and our fellow-labourers. "Young writers should be wise in their choice of books, and *read none which are not written in the best style*; at least, *while employed in the immediate study of composition*. I have thought," adds Dr. G., "that I derived much advantage from accustoming myself, before I sat down to compose, always to read a few pages in some good writer, whose spirit I should wish to catch; as best adapted to the subject on which I was to write. I have heard it said of that great master in the art of painting, Sir Joshua Reynolds, that he always finished his most exquisite paintings with some picture of the ancient masters near him, which harmonised with his subject; and not only kept his imagination in correspondence with it, but even served to invigorate and maintain the enthusiasm of genius."

Dr. Gregory seems to merit attention, when he remarks, that "it is not very easy to determine the *era of pure English*; but [he continues] I think *we should not look further back than the Revolution*. Hooker, Bacon, Milton, Hobbes, and even Temple, are scarcely to be considered as authorities in this respect." Who now will draw from Dr. Johnson's wells of English undefiled? Our author's cautions against foreign admixtures, particularly gallicisms, have our most unqualified approbation. We wish, for our part, that it were practicable even to engrave them in the minds of all our literary contemporaries. His judgment of literary composition is altogether valuable.—"After all that I have urged on this topic," concludes Dr. G., "you will derive more of *practical improvement* from the careful perusal of good authors, than from any rules that can be laid down. Take Pope, Addison, Burke, Robertson, Johnson (particularly the Preface to his Dictionary), and Gibbon; and observe carefully how each of these great writers arranged his words, and constructed his periods.

You will find something characteristic in each

[Why does Dr. G. omit to enumerate Junius and Goldsmith on this occasion?] with respect to the harmony of their numbers, and the structure of their sentences; but, though I advise you to study them all, I do not recommend a servile imitation of any."

Concurring in the eulogium passed on Addison's style, as worthy general imitation, by Dr. Johnson, our author afterwards observes, that "the imitators of Dr. Johnson have miserably failed, not because they were unable to ape his manner, but because they wanted the solidity of his observation and the brilliancy of his fancy."

Dr. Gregory's remarks on Oratory are pertinent and striking; and he awards, with justice, the palm of eloquence to the moderns.—"Let any unprejudiced critic," says he, "compare those specimens which the masters of eloquence among ourselves have condescended to publish, with the productions of the ancients, and let him determine for himself. I protest I find more genius and fancy, more knowledge of human nature, and a far greater proportion of wit, in the published speeches of Mr. Burke, than in any of the works of the ancient orators. The vehement and impressive oratory of Mr. Fox, the wit and pathos of Mr. Sheridan, and the choice and polished elocution of Mr. Pitt, might vie with any thing to be found in the most celebrated models of eloquence."

What Dr. Johnson sedulously attended to as a writer, our author especially recommends to the accomplished orator. "You will easily perceive," says Dr. G., "of what immense importance it is to an orator to accustom himself, even in common conversation, to polished language, and a very nice choice of expression. He must never permit himself to use a vulgarism, on the most common occasion, but must carefully eradicate all such noxious weeds from his vocabulary. A little attention to this chastity and correctness of expression, will soon render it easy and habitual. No other words but the best will present themselves to your mind; and, on the contrary, I am convinced, that unless a man has previously cleared his usual dialect from low and vicious expressions, they will obtrude themselves whenever he speaks in public, whatever may be his caution and attention." The foregoing remarks are highly judicious, and call for the particular attention of those who intend to become public speakers. We wish our limits allowed us also to extract this author's parallel between Pitt and Fox. His strictures on santiloquence, however, are not so satisfactory: he is, here, too much of the mechanist.

Respecting historical composition, we find the following concise and comprehensive direction. "The writer of even an extended history, should take care to have a clear and comprehensive view of the subject, in his mind, at least to a given period. He should see it as a picture, or a drama, before his eyes,—previous to his beginning to compose." Our author's retrospect of history, and his comments on historians, may be perused with advantage. With reference to our own country, he characterises Clarendon as "the first writer, in prose, who shewed the powers of the English language; and laid the foundation of those beauties which the succeeding age displayed."

Epistolary friendship may benefit by the following hint, the justness of which ourselves can testify. "If you wish to answer a letter with spirit, answer it as soon as possible after you have received it."—"To make a composition pefrect," continues our author, still treating of letter-writing, "there must be subject; and the petty incidents of private life are not subjects that can be expected to engage much of public attention." Had Dr. Gregory ever read the Correspondence of Cowper?

He next proceeds to discuss the merits of poetry. We cannot follow him through his statements and reasonings on this interesting subject; but must briefly state, that, according to him, Poetry has "originated in that instinctive love of harmony and music which is implanted in the whole human race:" that, as to us, though our mother-tongue has "quantity," and on the "tasteful and musical admixture of long and short syllables much of the harmony of our writers depends," yet that, "in the bulk of our poetry, and in our heroic verse in particular, more attention is given to *accent* than to *quantity*:" that, in fine, "modern poets have called in the aid of rhyme, without which, whether it arises from habit or from principle, very little modern poetry can please or satisfy the ear."

Dr. Gregory has paid very considerable attention to the Drama. Shakspeare is here the bard of his election; and we entirely approve the following opinion, arising from the consideration of his dramatic conduct. "Much nonsense has been advanced by critics, in the form of instruction for dramatic writers. Such as, that no actor should go off the stage more than five times; that the persons of the drama should not exceed a limited number; and that, during the course of an act, the stage never should be left vacant even for a single moment. All these pretended rules are bravely violated

by our English writers; and," adds Dr G., really I never could see any just argument for them." Dr. Gregory is also friendly to the Sentimental Comedy. He speaks highly of the dramatic muse of Sheridan. Adverting then to the German Stage, "I have seen," he says, "*The Stranger*; and I confess it has left me not the slightest wish to see any more from the same manufactory."

Of the higher efforts of poetry, he absolutely desponds!—"The day of epic poetry," he continues, "seems in a great measure to be passed by; and it is to be apprehended, that no modern epic poem will have any permanent success," &c. What say Messrs. Cumberland, Southey, Cottle, Sir James Bland Burges, Dr. Ogilvie, and Henry James Pye, to this?

The two volumes terminate with a disquisition, reprinted from the 'Memoirs of the Manchester Philosophical and Literary Society,' on The Uses of Classical Learning. It is ably and successfully written.

During a series of Letters embracing the experience of a long literary life, we naturally expected to meet with some novel views both of things and books. So far Dr. Gregory has not disappointed anticipation. He promulges some opinions, which to us are singular; and he pronounces some decisions, to which we should feel disposed to demur.—Sterne he calls a "most unclassical" writer, and will allow him to have exhibited only an "air of novelty." Hume "composed with great difficulty, and even with painful feelings: he is not copious, his vocabulary is remarkably limited; he can rarely reach either the sublime or the pathetic." Our author declares himself to be "an infidel with respect to the charges against those distinguished patriots Russel, Sidney, and the Duke of Shrewsbury, published in Sir John Dalrymple's Memoirs." "The novels of Richardson are full of trite sentiments, and too tedious." "Tom Jones is inferior to Joseph Andrews;" and "Smollett not equal to Fielding." We, however, have neither time nor inclination to discuss these points.

Inaccuraces of style, and inelegances of language, as they affect the rising generation of readers, require exposition. Young minds are chiefly in danger of being depraved by errors of composition when interspersed with works dedicated to literary instruction. The teacher is not suspected by the pupil. Such expressions as the following, then, are to be remarked and avoided, by all who aspire to attain true classicality.

—"I *dare believe*;" vol. 1, p. 23: "which would otherwise be *what is called* dry;" p. 62; "when we find *such an* author as Dr. Blair employing *such* expressions *as*;" p. 87.—"*I* am disposed *myself* to place the;" vol. 2, p. 67; "nor *does it much signify* with respect to;" p. 73: "in *this walk of literature* I am not;" p. 74: "*In truth*, I have seen;" and, "*in truth* though we have;" pp. 136—206: "another *capital blemish* in a lyric," &c.; p. 206.

We point out these imperfections for the reason we have already declared;—to benefit the living, not to impair the reputation of the deceased.

Our task of inspection is finished. We have perused the present volumes with considerable attention; we have derived some benefit from the contents of them; we wish well to the fame of their respectable author; and, notwithstanding the defects at which we have glanced, and others on which we might have expatiated, we now seriously recommend them to intelligent and inquisitive minds.

THE FALL OF CAMBRIA,

A POEM; IN TWO VOLUMES, AND TWENTY-FIVE CANTOS,

BY JOSEPH COTTLE.

IT has long been, and it is still generally thought, that epic genius lies buried in Milton's tomb. This opinion is not exactly true. We see many productions which, though entitled to no small share of praise, cannot be compared for sublimity of thought or excellence of diction, with the *Paradise Lost* of our immortal bard. Struck with their inferiority, we rashly declare they are not the sons of epic genius, as though we might be justified in branding the youngest part of a family with illegitimacy, because the beauty of their shape and countenance did not equal that of their elder brother. If we look into the annals of literature since the days of Milton to our own, we shall find they are not so barren of epic talents as we are

apt to imagine. We shall rescue Dryden and Glover from the oblivion in which their chief performances are nearly buried; and as we approach the confines of the present age, bestow due commendations on a few poets, whose works, though deficient in sublimity, and sometimes stained with a conceited simplicity and ostentatious poverty of language, are not devoid of merit.

The author of *The Fall of Cambria* has steered clear of the two last-mentioned defects, but has not paid attention enough to the harmony of his lines. The subject which he has chosen is important enough in itself, divested of all the gems of poetry and imagination, to awaken a powerful interest in the soul of the reader.—The fall of the little but warlike state of Cambria, the conquest of the only people who had baffled the all-devouring power of Rome, and their union with England under Edward the First, are objects that have contributed too much to the welfare of the British Empire, not to be considered by every Englishman with feelings of exultation. Yet we cannot refrain from observing, that had not the publication of this poem preceded the late occurrences in Spain, we would have advised the author to delay it a little longer, till the hearts of the public were better disposed to relish its merits. The facts, which he has recorded, spread before us a picture of triumphant ambition. We see a valiant Prince, beloved by his subjects, great in war and in peace, compelled at last, rather through the numbers than the courage of his royal antagonist, to dye with his blood the throne which he occupied, rather than give up his prerogative and the rights of his people to an invading foe. We see a highly-spirited nation fired with love for their country and their Prince, rising in arms against the proud and unjust Edward, exerting all their powers, and sacrificing their lives to oppose this threatening aggressor, and yet foiled by his superior force in the execution of their noble design. Here, the wisdom of age, the enthusiasm of patriotism, and the valour of despair, prove unsuccessful against an experienced enemy. This instance renders problematical the doctrine of those who advise the rulers of nations to consult the past, and act according to its dictates; for how many enterprises equally honourable and beneficial to mankind would have been checked at their birth, had the annals of history been explored by their projectors.

Simplicity is the soul of an epic poem. The great end which it is intended to celebrate, must always be kept in view, and every subordinate and apparently detached event, form but a distant, not a separate link of the chain of action. Mr. Cottle in his *Fall of Cambria*, has attended to this rule. He has not crowded his work with too many episodes, that crush instead of heightening the interest, like a profusion of jewels that cannot add to the beauty of nature. Those which he has introduced, such as Prince David's defection, and subsequent repentance, are so closely interwoven with the main subject, that it seems difficult, if not impossible, to divide them.

The poem opens with the march of Edward the First and his army towards Cambria, and their arrival at Chester. Desirous to check the effusion of human blood, England's high Primate requests his King to send him on an embassy to Llewellyn to try to bring him to terms of accommodation, and Edward yields to his eloquence.

The Earl of Warwick suddenly arrives with the intelligence that Eleanor de Montford, Lancaster's daughter, and pledged to Llewellyn, Prince of Cambria, has been taken prisoner on her return from France, whither she had sought a refuge at her father's death. Edward refuses to see her, on account of her beauty, and she remains under the protection of Earl Talbot, at Gloucester castle. We then are transported to the top of Snowdon, where Llewellyn has gathered his army to march against the invaders. The magnificence of the scenery shines in the following lines, as a sublime landscape, reflected in a faithful mirror:

"The sun had mounted to the noon of day,
"When circled by his warriors, brave and
" bold
"Llewellyn stood. Clear was the firmament;
"Old Snowdon with austere magnificence,
"Beside him rose, crag piled on massy crag;
"Here rifted by the war of elements,
"There green and shaven by the summer flocks
"Thick scatter'd, whilst the sheep-dog's mel-
" low'd voice,
"Just broke the silence. In the distance rose,
"Faint blending with the air, Mona, the seat
"Of Bardic lore, with Ocean, and her line
"Of blue transparency, by sleeping winds
"Unruffled."

Here, Rhywaldon, a chieftain, who till then had opposed Llewellyn in his pretensions to the throne, joins him, surrounded with his vassals, and sacrifices private enmity to the general weal of his country. Llewellyn is astonished at his brother David's absence, but his suspi-

cions are quieted by Edwall the companion and friend of that Prince. The Bishop now arrives; Llewellyn declares, that before taking up arms he has sent repeated remonstrances to the English Monarch, requesting him to prevent the Marsh-Lords from invading and pillaging his lands, and offers peace on condition of obtaining justice. A few moments after, he receives a letter from Eleanor, informing him of her captivity in Gloucester castle, which he resolves to take by surprise, and thus deliver his bride. David now appears, and vents in words his anger against his brother, who has assumed the sovereignty of the whole country, instead of sharing it with him; but Edwall attempts to appease his wrath. Meanwhile Earl Talbot falls in love with Eleanor, and tries to compel her to marry him; but Warwick returns, challenges and conquers him, but grants him life, and carries away the maiden to his own castle. Scarce has he departed, when Llewellyn and his army reach Gloucester's towers. The recovered Earl demands a parley, with the intent of murdering the Cambrian Prince, who is informed of his treachery by an English knight and a squire. Through the means of the latter he is introduced into the castle at night, with his warriors. The English garrison surrender, and Talbot leaps from the walls into the moat, and effects his escape. We now follow the Bishop back to Chester. He gives an account of his embassy: the King denies having received any petitions from Llewellyn. The Bishop hints, that the High Chancellor, De Frankton, a Norman, who had the management of all state affairs, had perhaps kept them concealed from his monarch's sight. De Frankton is convicted and hanged, and Edward is about to send new ambassadors to the Prince of Cambria to treat of peace, when Talbot arrives, and by his lying account of Llewellyn's cruelty, rekindles the torch of war. In the tenth book Prince David, unable to repress the swellings of his disappointed ambition, repairs to the English Monarch at Chester, acknowledges himself his vassal, is knighted by him, and receives a promise of being created Prince of Cambria when his brother is fallen. Edward enters Cambria, and orders Earl Mortimer to fell the trees which had till then shielded the foe. Whilst performing this office, he makes an old prophetess prisoner, who, when led before the King, threatens him with future defeats, but whose patriotic spirit is nearly quenched by a purse of gold. Llewellyn returns to Aber, and learns Edward's approach and his own brother's defection. His courage is not subdued, and he prepares for immediate war. Meanwhile the English King takes possession of the castle of Rhudland, and sends Talbot and Venables with his Flemings to subdue the island of Mona.

Llewellyn is at last informed of Edward's approach, and prepares to march forward with his army to meet him. Denbigh falls, taken by storm, and Cynan and all the Cambrians by whom it was defended, sink into a common grave. Scarce has the English Monarch wrenched the bloody palm of triumph, when Prince David is announced. He had boasted that one half of Cambria would rise in his favour, but now appears attended by a single chieftain, "Corf, the blind," whom he has left at the gate. Edward orders him to be admitted into his presence, but he is no longer found, repentance had led him back. David is then sent to Mona, to assist Talbot and Venables, who refuse to obey him. He approaches the shore in a boat, and addresses the assembled islanders, inviting them to join him in his rebellion. A shower of darts is their answer. The English land, fight and conquer. Llyrarch, whose harp and songs animated the warriors of Mona, is taken by the conquerors, and deceived by false promises of amity, leads them to the forest where the bards lived in security and retirement. Unmindful of their oaths, Talbot and Venables command them all to be put to death. Caradoc, their chief, is spared through the intercession of David.—Struck with horror and remorse, this ambitious Prince embarks at night alone in a small boat, and resolves to implore his brother's forgiveness, and resume the defence of his country.—On his arrival in Cambria, he meets with Edwall, who sought him with the hope of prevailing over him to forsake Edward's cause.—They proceed to join Llewellyn, but are overtaken by Stanley and Seymour, with English soldiers, in pursuit of David. Edwall assumes his name, surrenders himself, and thus secures the escape of the Prince, who suddenly returns with Cambrian warriors from Bangor, rescues his friend, and frees Stanley, who had fallen a prisoner into his power. The two brothers, Llewellyn and David, meet at Conway castle; the latter is forgiven, and entrusted with a division of the Cambrian army, with which he defeats Earl Mortimer, and retakes Rhuthynon and Denbigh. Meanwhile Edward crosses Conway river, after a doubtful battle with Llewellyn's army, and attacks Conway castle. Having reached the top of the battlements, he is hurled down by a blow from Llewellyn's axe,

but saved by falling into the arms of a knight. Talbot and Venables arrive, loaded with spoils from conquered Mona. Edward, informed of the murder of the bards, banishes Talbot from his camp, and this guilty and cowardly Earl puts an end to his own existence. Venables is hanged on a tree. Apprised of the reinforcements which the English army has received, Llewellyn retreats to Dolbadarn, on Snowdon's head, and forming a junction with his brother David's force, surrounds Stanley and his division, who had penetrated thus far during his absence, and makes them prisoners, but afterwards frees Stanley. Llewellyn then marches against Earl Warwick, who lays waste the land of Dinevawr, and leads Eleanor captive with him. Warwick is nearly surrounded in a ruined castle, but escapes with his troops through a secret passage, and honourably leaves Eleanor behind, who being thus at last restored to the brave Prince of Cambria, returns with him to Dolbadarn. Edward reaches the foot of Snowdon. A severe battle is fought between the English and the Cambrians commanded by David, who is taken prisoner and beheaded by Edward's orders. A second battle ensues, and the valiant, wise, and amiable Llewellyn falls by the ambitious Monarch's sword. Dolbadarn is taken by storm, Eleanor dies with grief, Edward proclaims his son, who was born a few days before in Cambria, Prince of Wales: the Cambrians testify their approbation by loud shouts of joy, and the poem closes.

The chief feature of this work is not stiff, but pleasant regularity. The course of the action is not checked by any improbable event; the characters are drawn with strength and originality, and well supported throughout the whole. Prince David's defection, and repentance, his contrition and his patriotism, produce many grand and pathetic scenes. The catastrophe, although it may be partly anticipated by imagination, is rendered novel by the execution of Llewellyn's brother, and the death of his mistress. The style is rich with poetical beauties, the sentiments are noble and natural, the images, although numerous, always simple and just, and sometimes magnificent. All his descriptions are exquisite pictures, where truth shines bright through the glass of fancy. The excellence of the following passage will prove an apology for its insertion. The English army is passed in review by Edward.

" War now appear'd, dress'd in his gayest
" garb,
" A spectacle of glory, half allied
" To lower deities. The eye that saw
" Gaz'd with admiring stedfastness, and felt
" Idolatry steal to the willing heart:
" Such was his port august. Amid the scene,
" All winning forms were manifest. Proud
" plumes
" Danc'd in the air; the playful banner
" wav'd;
" The glittering spear, firm from the ground,
" uprais'd,
" And burnish'd helm, and gorget, caught the
" beams,
" The sun in his effulgence scatter'd round,
" And dazzled the rapt eye. O'er the wide
" scene,
" Thus teeming with delight, each man dis-
" play'd
" His richest wardrobe, gay as summer flies:
" And whilst the lulling music fills the air
" With concords and sweet sounds, in extacy
" The warrior drinks th' intoxicating draught,
" And reels with happiness. * * *
* * * * * * * * *
" What form is that which limping lags along,
" Unknown of all? His friends he passes by,
" Unnoticed. Bending to the earth he stoops,
" And mourns in silence, longing for that place,
" The last sad antidote of misery!
" Can it be War? whose head so late ap-
" peared
" Lofty as Atlas, and whose look, alone
" Wander'd among the stars? * * *
" Fall'n Potentate! * * * * *
" Hard fare, hard lodging, night, the hour of
" rest
" Oft broken, and unceasing watch and toil—
" Now, combating with the rude elements,
" Now, with the foe, has bent thy lofty head,
" Quench'd thy fierce spirit, and thy ghastly
" eyes
" Fix'd on the charnel-house.—We know thee
" not.
" Thy alter'd state an alter'd voice demands.
" Go! and conceal with kindred multitudes
" Thy scar-crown'd head! Go: and before
" thou diest
" And slumber'st with the myriads now no
" more.
* * * * * * * * *
" Whilst yet the lamp of being dimly burns
" Go! make thy peace with God!"

In the rhymed hymns which Mr. Cottle has introduced in his poem, his genius seems conscious of its fetters. His numbers are often stiff and inharmonious.

The chief defect of his style is a frequent repetition of the same words; and an occasional

poverty of language, that belongs to prose only. Of the former we will give a few instances:

"Phantoms that cross our way, *eager* we
"seek,
"The faintest shadow of the plain pursue
"With *eager* intellect," &c.
"Llewellyn pass'd, where seldom woodman's
"*voice*
"Roused Echo.
"Creation's sweetest note there seldom came,
"The human *voice* angelic, in the nerve
"Of fellow man kindling divinest joy.
"Is it the *voice* of wind?" &c.

Of the second, the following may suffice—

"The victors close at hand beating them
"down."

We should be glad to learn whether there be *lively*, as well as "*grave* oaks," and in what consists the *seriousness* of a tree. Mr. Cottle must have a quicker sight than any other man can boast, for he has descried, not the breeze itself, that would be too easy, but, as he tells us in one of his lines, its very *shadow*.

These light errors are so few in number, that the most searching attention alone can perceive them. Two or three conceited expressions might perhaps be pointed out; but whilst writing a poem as long as *The Fall of Cambria*, it is almost impossible that judgment should *incessantly* hold the reins of imagination. We do not recollect a single instance in which bombast of thought or language, or affectation of sentiment, met the quickest glance of our observation. The speeches of the respective characters are perhaps too long, and too frequent, but their eloquence makes ample amends for their intrusion. If the author have seldom attained sublimity, he has *never* sunk into mediocrity; and whilst many poetical sky-rockets have of late dazzled the judgment of the public with their fleeting blaze, we think that his work will prove a star of no small magnitude, destined to rise on the horizon of posterity.

CRITICAL OPINIONS.

'Tis hard to say, if greater want of skill
Appear in writing or in judging ill;
But, of the two, less dangerous is th' offence
To tire our patience than mislead our sense:
Some few in that, but numbers err in this;
Ten censure wrong, for one who writes amiss.—*Pope.*

THIS division of LE BEAU MONDE is designed to include those works whose merits do not appear to warrant the detail of criticism. Most of our readers, we should suppose, are fully acquainted with the plan of *Le Clerc's Bibliotheque*, and will, therefore, feel disposed to allow the advantages of the method adopted by him in that truly literary undertaking. We aspire, we own, as far as this department enables us, and circumstances authorise, to imitate that illustrious critic.

Of such publications as do not demand an extended account, we accordingly purpose, under the head CRITICAL OPINIONS, to give, from time to time, satisfactory notices. We pledge ourselves to fidelity and impartiality. Though concise, we shall endeavour to be correct; though confined, we trust we shall be found conclusive.

Opinion is but opinion. What one asserts, another may deny; and, contrarywise, what one affirms, the other may dispute. We hope, nevertheless, to obviate these perplexities; and, generally, to satisfy the expectations both of authors and readers.

An Heroic Epistle to Sir Hew: with a Word to Sir Arthur.

IF the reader expects now to be gratified with something like wit and satire, with an efficient political pasquinade, he must be content to be disappointed. There are really no traces of heroism discernable in the present performance. Take, by way of specimen, the following distich, in which, short as it is, the poetic epistoliser, has contrived to detail the Life of his Hero!—

"Growing from small to great, from short to "*tall*,
"You rose, at length, Lieutenant-Gene*ral*."

Perhaps, indeed, it was very proper that a feeble commander should be celebrated only by a feeble poet.

Memoirs of the Public and Private Life of Sir Richard Phillips, Knight: High Sheriff for the City of London and County of Middlesex, &c. &c. By a Citizen of London, and Assistants.

Sir Richard Phillips, doubtless, little imagined, when he projected his annual menagerie of 'Public Characters,' that he was establishing an exhibition of which he was hereafter to form one of the subjects. Here, however, is the Knight Sheriff (alas! his shrievalty will be nearly terminated when this article shall have met the public eye), dragged from his wonted privacy, and exposed, for the value of five shillings, to the rude gaze, and still ruder remarks, of the multitude! But who is this self-appointed "Citizen of London," that, with his Court of "Assistants" to boot, has ventured to biographise the very Proprietor of Biography himself? We suspect, we more than suspect, that he is *no citizen* of any place, excepting, indeed, the world; and as for his assistants (unless these were his *publisher* and the *sheriff* together!!), we feel some difficulty in deciding. Start not, gentle reader! at this conjectural combination.—Such things are.

What think we of the *work* before us? The subject is worthy of the biographer, and the biography is worthy of its subject.

Observations on Seduction and Prostitution, &c. &c.: Extracted from, &c. &c.: by Mary Smith, a penitent, late of the Magdalen Hospital, &c. &c. &c.

If we did not apprehend that our strictures might deprive poor Mary Smith of some few half-crowns, the price of this production, which has been "published for her benefit," we should be inclined to make rather severe remarks upon it. Circumstanced as we feel ourselves, we shall only observe—that the Address it contains to the Legislature, suggesting measures for the Prevention of Seduction, though some of the proposed remedies are justly exceptionable, forms, nevertheless, the most *useful* portion of this pamphlet; and, as matter of course, that Mr. Pratt's Poetry, must be allowed to constitute its most *entertaining* part. Morals, we are convinced, are very little indebted to the swarm of sermonising publications with which our age abounds.

An Analisis of Country-Dancing, &c. &c. &c. &c. &c. By T. Wilson, Dancing-Master, from the King's Theatre, Opera House, &c.

We have not room to transcribe even the title of this extraordinary production, which presents such a bill of fare as might almost induce one to suspect the promised feast. Mr. Wilson is one of your *qualifying* authors. Study his book; and you are sure to dance, or, in his most exquisite style, "to acquire, in a short time (*without* the aid of *a master*), a complete knowledge of that rational and polite Amusement." We fear, however, as it is some time since we were caparisoned and capering, that, notwithstanding these printed directions, we should now "jump too light and too high" to avail ourselves of the splendid advantages they may be calculated to impart.

This treatise, on "the most enchanting of all human amusements," is dedicated, "*by permission*" too, to Madame *Deshayes!* Why did not Mr. Wilson inscribe it to Lord Henry Petty,—the dancing premier, and premier of dancers?

Ancient Ballads, selected from Percy's Collection, &c. by a Lady.

This selection is not ill executed; but we have seen one far better, and at half the price charged for the present. What we refer to, is published in Suttaby's Miniature Library; and is entitled 'Calliope: a Selection of Poems, Legendary and Pathetic.' It is almost an original collection.

Religious Education, &c.; a Charge delivered to the Archdeaconry of St. Albans, at the Visitation, holden June 8, A. D. 1808. By Joseph Holden Pott, A. M. Prebendary of Lincoln, and Archdeacon of St. Albans.

Excellent, and gratifying, is the contrast between Francis Stone and Joseph Holden Pott!

While the former seems to have yielded up the citadel of christianity, the latter earnestly contends even for its outworks. Had the nature of our miscellany admitted of it, we should, with pleasure, have opened a long account of this "Charge;" and we therefore take the chance of urging it on the attention of our reflecting readers.

A Vindication of Mrs. Lee's Conduct to the Gordons; written by herself.

The day has passed by, when Mrs. Lee's Vindication would have created extensive interest; and (what, however, is not her object) have also insured profit. Some inquisitive persons will undoubtedly read her pages; but they deserve extended circulation.

FINE ARTS.

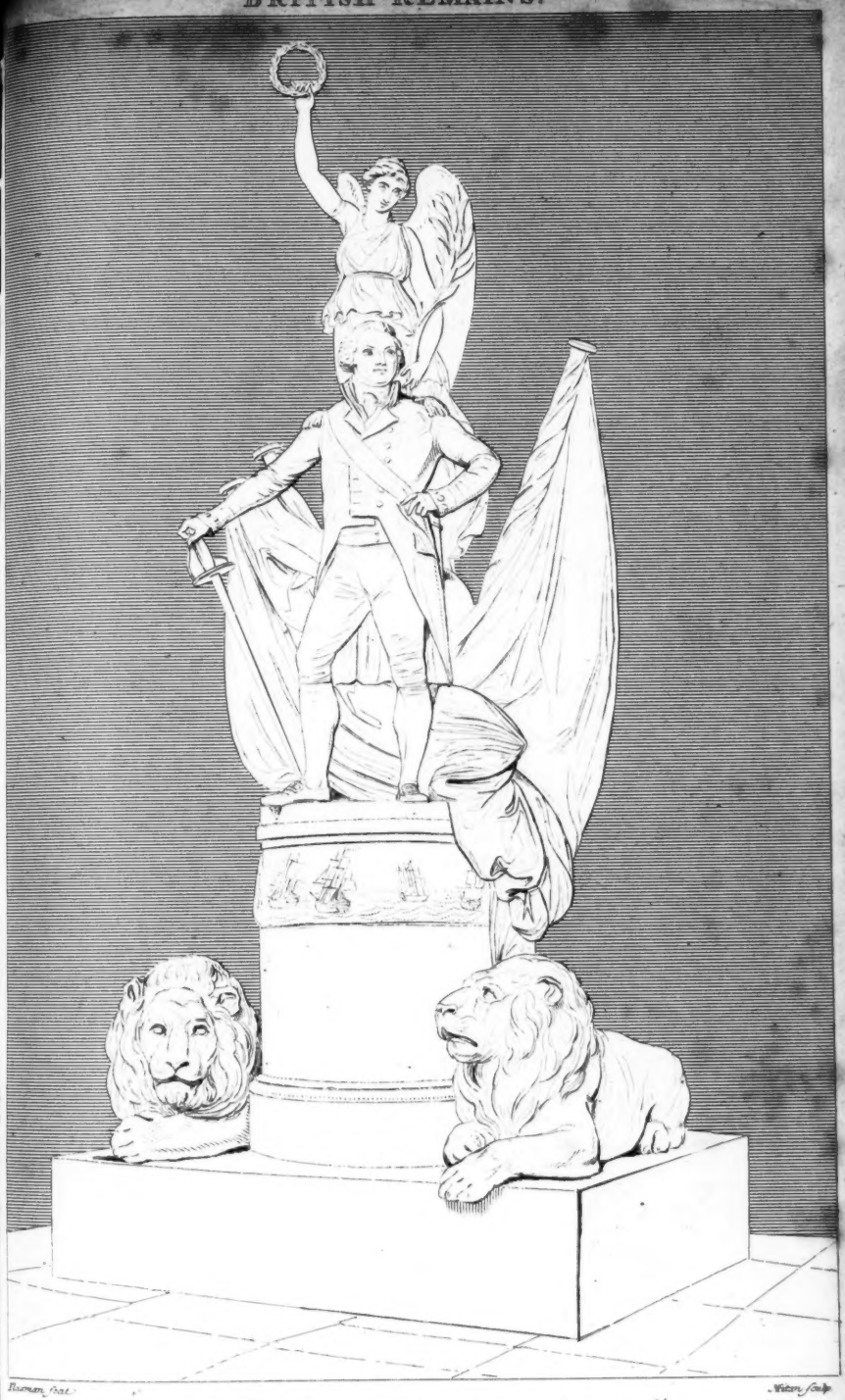
BRITISH REMAINS.

Wide as yon countless orbs diffuse their blaze,
Boundless as space extends or being flows,
No spot so dear approving Heaven surveys
As where the wise and virtuous dead repose.

Unfading laurels, o'er the sacred urn,
Aloft their ever-verdant foliage spread;
The muses, there, their choicest incense burn,
And rolling spheres their kindest influence shed!

Maurice.

THE cultivation of the arts has in all ages been considered as productive, not only of rational pleasure to the amateur, but also of a refinement of ideas, and even of a civilization of manners amongst the great mass of the people. In the earliest times the different specimens of the sculptor's art were placed in the temples and other conspicuous situations, that they might be constantly under the public eye, and be alike the objects of public admiration and of public criticism. By these means, as a judicious French writer has observed, the taste of the public is formed, and that of connoisseurs is improved; besides, to multiply the number of *connoisseurs* in any of the elegant arts, tends to increase the number of *amateurs*, because in proportion as the people are accustomed to judicious observation, not only the love of the arts itself encreases, but also the general esteem for those who cultivate them; so that new candidates for public fame are stimulated to exertion, and the arts themselves hasten with rapid strides to perfection. It was evidently from a motive of this kind, that Alexander the Great, who preserved a love of literature and of the arts, even in his mad career of conquest and victory, was induced to order that the study of design, of sculpture, and of painting, should form a part of the education of the young nobility. It has been said that this idea originated with *Pamphilus*, a native of Macedonia, and the master of the much-famed *Apelles*, who by his own example shewed that an exquisite taste for the *Belles Lettres* was perfectly compatible with the manual industry of the artist; and the principle was at one time carried so far as to permit the nobles alone to exercise the pallet and the pencil. Of all the nations of antiquity, however, the Grecians were, perhaps, those to whom this law was the *least necessary*, but who, from that very circumstance, were the most likely *to obey it*; an observation completely verified on the death of him from whom it sprung; for, midst all the intestine wars which deluged the plains of Greece with the blood of its purest patriots, this law of Alexander, so favourable to the arts, remained in full force during many succeeding generations. It may, indeed, be observed, that both the religion, and the form of government in Greece, were highly advantageous to sculpture; the idolatry of the time which prompted the erec-



Rossman, Pinx.

Watson, Sculp.

Erected by Parliament to the memory of Capt. Montague, who fell on the 1st of June 1794.

Published by & for Bell & Decamp, 11, Catherine Street, Strand, Nov. 1, 1808.

tion of altars to the Divine Being, adored under so many different symbols, and the personification even of the moral feelings under palpable forms, were in themselves a powerful stimulus to excellence, calling forth, in all parts of that classic ground, the exercise of the purest genius and of the most cultivated talents.—The adoration which they thus rendered to the work of their own hands, naturally gave rise to a profound veneration in the breasts of the multitude, who having raised the loves and graces, truth, genius, and industry, into divinities, soon became enthusiastic devotees not only towards the objects of their worship, but even towards the art itself. Social policy—which has been defined as being the secret of rendering both the good and evil qualities of individuals conducive to general advantage, and which in all nations has closely followed the footsteps of religion, to collect her precepts, in order to form the most permanent bonds for the preservation of social order,—this policy in its turn gave assistance to religion, and their united powers tended still more strongly to patronise the efforts of the *chissel*. The small republics of Greece, divided by a thousand interests and a thousand jealousies, found it necessary to recompence public merit; but as their poverty prevented them from offering pecuniary rewards from the funds of the state, they judiciously determined to render their patriots *illustrious*, in preference to loading them with places and pensions. On this principle, they formed a simple and honourable system of public rewards, which cost but little, and which gratified alike the vanity and self-love of those who received them, and that general taste for sculpture which was now so warmly felt by all ranks in society. Emolument and patronage were now unthought-of by those who pressed eagerly forward for public offices; their sole recompence was the hope of a bust, a statue, an inscription in some conspicuous place, or *a tomb which should consign their names to immortality*. This species of *apotheosis*, which elevated the legislator, the hero, the philosopher, or the poet, from a state of mortality to that of divinity, tended most powerfully to produce those instances of public virtue, which illumine the classic pages of antiquity; and the modesty which always accompanies virtue, was a frequent inducement with each to elude public honours during his life, knowing well that the tomb, or the cenotaph, would perpetuate his name to a grateful posterity. As the hope of immortality produces a pleasing and a virtuous bias in the human breast, so the contemplation of the memorials of those who have *lived* and *died* for their country, is not only gratifying to the imagination, but also elevates the soul to purposes of goodness and of virtue. Our immortal *Addison*, in one of his inimitable *Spectators*, describes with heartfelt simplicity, that awful sensation which pervades every thinking mind, whilst wandering midst the funereal gloom of Westminster Abbey, and treading on the hallowed dust of the virtue and the greatness of past ages, where the arm of power is now unnerved, where the eloquence of the philosopher is mute, where the heaven-formed bosom of beauty is wrapped in the cold shroud, and where the majestic form of the hero, is sunk in death. Of all public memorials, indeed, none are so interesting as the tombs of our ancestors, or our fellow-citizens; and it is worthy of observation, that all nations, whether in a state of nature or of civilization, contemplate them with veneration. In China, the tombs are the principal embellishments in the outskirts of their cities, and are always placed in the most picturesque or conspicuous situations in the country. Among savage nations, they form the link which binds man to the spot of his nativity. "Shall we desert the bones of our fathers, or "can we say to them arise! and accompany "us to a foreign land?" has always been the answer of the untutored Indian, to those Europeans who would have induced him to leave his native woods, and partake of the selfish and anxious cares of civilized society. It is from the general effect of this natural instinct, that the tombs of great men inspire us with the sublimest veneration; and this consideration has induced the conductors of *Le Beau Monde* to commence a national collection of the most interesting monuments, so as to form a complete series of BRITISH REMAINS, where a judicious selection of the most elegant efforts of the Sculptor shall lead not only to biographical retrospect, but also to critical analysis, and to animated observations on the arts and manners of different eras.

The first specimen which they have selected for public notice is a *chef d'œuvre* of the art, by Flaxman, and occupies a conspicuous place in Westminster Abbey, being erected to the memory of Captain James Montague, who fell whilst commanding the Montague, of 74 guns, on the memorable 1st of June, 1794. The grateful nation, which gave this proof of their gratitude and esteem to a departed hero, have also shewn themselves not unmindful of generosity towards the artist, as we understand that he has received, for this sublime effort of his chissel, the sum of 3500 guineas. This

This monument, which is placed so as to be approached on all sides, rises to the heighth of 20 feet; a circular pedestal supports a colossal figure of the hero, in the naval costume, and behind him is placed a globe, from which Victory rises, prepared to crown him with a wreath of laurel; the front of the pedestal is ornamented, in alto-relief, with a sketch of the action; and at the back are two well executed figures in the attitude of grief for his loss; whilst two immense lions, in a recumbent posture, appear, as well-chosen emblematic guardians to the whole groupe. We may consider this superb monument as a fair specimen of Mr. Flaxman's skill; the principal characteristics of the whole sculpture are, simplicity and grandeur of design; proving that he has not only studied arduously, but also with taste and discrimination, the works of the best masters of antiquity. Those specimens which time has left us of the works of Phidias, have been his model,—like him, with a daring mind, he discards the frivolous *minutiæ*, so disgraceful in modern artists, and judiciously sacrifices all intersection of parts, in order to produce a magnificent whole; hence arises the flowing line, so discernable throughout this composition. The "Hero stands confest," in a firm and dignified attitude, resting on his sword; the sculptor has had recourse to no immensity of stride, no angular twist, or surreptitious expression, to designate a conqueror,—the Victory standing on the globe, is sufficient to intimate the result of the valour of Captain Montague; this figure, which is purely *Grecian*, does the highest honour to the classic taste of Mr. Flazman; the imposing grandeur, so conspicuous elsewhere, is here wrought to extreme elegance, producing the happiest effect; the drapery of the *ensigns* is well arranged; and the lions at the base, whilst they exquisitely groupe with the grand whole, produce, by their gigantic sublimity, a most harmonious contrast with the finished elegance of the other parts. Mr. Flaxman seems to have kept in his eye a system of comparative gradation in architecture, which might be judiciously adhered to by other artists, particularly in all public works: the base is a happy specimen of the *Tuscan*, the hero *Ionic*, and the Goddess Victory *Corinthian*, thus combining the essential requisites of proportion with sublimity of design, *a desideratum often attempted, but seldom gained!* It now only remains slightly to sketch the life of him, whose fall is here so elegantly commemorated. Capt. James Montague was the third son of the late Admiral Montague, and younger brother of the present Admiral. He was born at Fareham, in Hampshire; and the vicinity of this place to a seaport, together with the professional bias which he must naturally have received from his father, seem to have determined his choice of a sea-life, into which he entered very early, and rose rapidly to the rank of Post-Captain. During the American war he was always actively employed, but had no particular opportunity of signalizing himself; and when the hostile conduct of France obliged this country to arm, he received the command of the Montague, as a compliment, said expressly to have arisen from royal patronage. How well he fulfilled the expectations of his country on the glorious 1st of June, it is needless to detail further than in the words of a journalist of the time. In the naval action of this day, his skill was conspicuous, and his bravery the admiration of his brother officers. He was engaged with a three-decker, and fell by a cannon ball nearly at the close of the action, valiantly exerting himself in the cause of his country; which in him has lost an able officer, his family the best of relations, and society one of its chiefest ornaments. He was an affectionate son, a kind brother, and a sincere friend.

"For ever! on that day's return,
"The Muse their deeds shall tell,
"And shed her sorrows o'er the urn
"Of those that bravely fell;
"And weave immortal wreaths of fame
"To Montague's and Bowyer's name."

POETRY.

ORIGINAL.

THE LYRE OF LOVE,

TO MISS ——.

AGAIN, again, I strike the lyre,
Led by the voice of young desire;
Again I sweep those magic strings,
From whence harmonious sweetness springs;
While through each vale, and haunted grove,
Resounds the plaintive lyre of love!

Maid of my soul! whose peerless mind
Was form'd to captivate mankind;
Whose charms divine, whose envied mien,
Might grace e'en Cypria's lovely Queen;
Oh! range with me to yonder grove,
Oh! listen to the lyre of love!

Love bids me bend at beauty's shrine;
Propitious Maid! I bend at thine:
Love bids me raise the tuneful song,
If so, to thee the notes belong:
Range then with me to yonder grove,
And listen to the lyre of love!

Florio.

IMITATION OF THE 6TH EPIGRAM,

IN THE 9TH BOOK OF MARTIAL.

To Paulla, a Woman of bad Character, who wished to marry Priscus, a wealthy Merchant.

PAULLA! to marry Priscus much, I know,
you wish;
And that you do, I'm sure, I don't much
wonder:
I think *you're wise*;—but Priscus, ah, that cunning fish!
He shews *his wisdom*; for he keeps asunder!

Junius.

SELECTIONS.

AYLESBURY RACES.

A BALLAD.

O George*, I've been, I'll tell you where,
But first prepare yourself for raptures;
To paint this charming, heavenly fair,
And paint her well, would ask whole chapters.

Fine creatures I've view'd many a one,
With lovely shapes, and angel faces,
But I have seen them all outdone,
By this sweet maid, at Aylesbury Races.

Lords, commoners, alike she rules,
Takes all who view her by surprise,
Makes e'en the wisest look like fools,
Nay more, makes fox-hunters look wise.

Her shape—'tis elegance and ease,
Unspoil'd by art, or modern dress,
But gently tapering by degrees,
And finely, beautifully less.

Her foot—it was so wond'rous small,
So thin, so round, so slim, so neat,
The buckle fairly hid it all,
And seem'd to sink it with the weight.

And just above the spangled shoe,
Where many an eye did often glance,
Sweetly retiring from the view,
And seen by stealth, and seen by chance;
Two slender ankles peeping out,
Stood like Love's heralds, to declare
That all, within the petticoat,
Was firm, and full, and round, and fair.

And then she dances—better far
Than heart can think, or tongue can tell;
Nor Heinel, Banti, or Guimar,
E'er mov'd so gracefully, so well.

So easy glide her beauteous limbs,
True as the echo to the sound;
She seems, as through the dance she skims,
To tread on air, and scorn the ground.

And there is lightning in her eye,
One glance alone might well inspire
The clay-cold breast of apathy,
Or bid the frozen heart catch fire.

And zephyr on her lovely lips
Has shed his choicest, sweetest roses,
And there his heavenly nectar sips,
And there in breathing sweets reposes.

And there's such music when she speaks,
You may believe me, when I tell ye,
I'd rather hear her, than the squeaks
Or far-fam'd squalls of Gabrielli.

And sparkling wit, and steady sense,
In that fair form with beauty vie,
But ting'd with virgin diffidence,
And the soft blush of modesty.

* George Ellis, Esq. is probably here addressed.

Had I the treasures of the world,
All the sun views, or the seas borrow,
(Else may I to the devil be hurl'd)
I'd lay them at her feet to-morrow.

But as we bards reap only bays,
Nor much of that, though nought grows on it,
I'll beat my brains to sound her praise,
And hammer them into a sonnet.

And if she deign one charming smile,
The bless'd reward of all my labours,
I'll never grudge my pains, or toil,
But pity the dull 'squires, my neighbours.

QUERY.

WHAT is love? a morning vapour,
Flying from the beams of day.
What is love? a midnight taper,
Dying, with the hours, away.

'Tis the sigh the infant utters,
'Ere it knows the use of breath;
'Tis the moth that gaily flutters
Round the flame that dooms its death.

'Tis the glow-worm's witching glory,
Luring trav'llers in the mire;
'Tis the gossip's goblin story,
Told around a winter fire.

'Tis the dream that haunts our pillows;
'Tis a castle in a air;
'Tis the tears of weeping willows;
Tears that really never were.

'Tis, oh! 'tis, the rose, in fancy,
In *reality* the thorn;
And I've heard a *married* man say,
'Tis the Devil!—by his *horn!*

ELEGY

WRITTEN IN A COLLEGE LIBRARY.

THE chapel-bell, with hollow mournful sound,
Awakes the Fellows, slumbering o'er their fires;
Rous'd by the 'custom'd note, each stares around,
And sullen from the unfinish'd pipe retires.

Now from the Common-Hall's restriction free,
The sot's full bottles in quick order move,
While gayer coxcombs sip their amorous tea,
And barbers' daughters soothe with tales of love.

Through the still court a solemn silence reigns,
Save where, the broken battlements among,
The east wind murmurs through the shatter'd panes,
And hoarser ravens croak their evening song.

Where groan yon shelves beneath their learned weight,
Heap piled on heap, and row succeeding rows,
In peaceful pomp, and undisturb'd retreat,
The labours of our ancestors repose.

No longer sunk in ceaseless fruitless toil,
The half-starv'd student o'er their leaves shall pore;
For them no longer blaze the midnight oil,
Their sun is set, and sinks to rise no more:

For them no more shall booksellers contend,
Or rubric posts their matchless worth proclaim:
Beneath their weight no more the press shall bend,
While common-sense stands wondering at their fame.

Oft did the Classics mourn their critic rage,
While still they found each meaning but the true;
Oft did they heap with notes poor Ovid's page,
And give to Virgil words he never knew:

Yet ere the partial voice of critic-scorn
Condemn their memory, or their toils deride,
Say, have we not had equal cause to mourn
A waste of words, and learning ill applied?

Can none remember?—Yes, I know all can—
When readings against different readings jarr'd,
While Bentley led the stern scholastic van,
And new editions with the old ones warr'd.

Nor ye, who lightly o'er each work proceed,
Undmindful of the graver moral part,
Contemn these works, if as you run, and read,
You find no trophies of th' engraver's art.

Can Bartolozzi's all-enrapturing pow'r,
To heavy works the stamp of merit give?
Could Grignion's art protract oblivion's hour,
Or bid the epic rage of Blackmore live?

In this lone nook, with learned dust bestrew'd,
Where frequent cobwebs kindly form a shade,
Some wond'rous legend, fill'd with death and blood,
Some monkish history perhaps is laid;

With store of barbarous Latin at command,
Though arm'd with puns, and jingling quibble's might,
Yet could not these soothe Time's remorseless hand,
Or save their labours from eternal night.

Full many an Elegy has mourn'd its fate,
Beneath some pasty cabin'd, cribb'd, confin'd,
Full many an Ode has soar'd in lofty state,
Fix'd to a kite, and quivering in the wind.

Here too, perhaps, neglected now, may lie
The rude memorial of some ancient song,
Whose martial strains, and rugged minstrelsy,
Once wak'd to rapture every listening throng.

To trace fair Science through each wildering course,
With new ideas to enlarge the mind,
With useful lessons drawn from classic source,
At once to polish, and instruct mankind;

Their times forbade: nor yet alone repress'd
Their opening fancy; but alike confin'd
The senseless ribaldry, the scurvy jest,
And each low triumph of the vulgar mind.

—Their humbler science never soar'd so far,
In studious trifles pleas'd to waste their time,
Or wage with common-sense eternal war,
In never-ending clink of monkish rhyme.

Yet were they not averse to noisy fame,
Or shrank reluctant from her ruder blast,
But still aspir'd to raise their sinking name,
And fondly hop'd that name might ever last.

Hence each proud volume to the wondering eye,
Rivals the gaudy glare of Tyrrel's * urn;
Where ships, wigs, Fame, and Neptune's blended lie,
And weeping cherubs for their bodies mourn.

For who with rhymes e'er rack'd his weary brain,
Or spent in search of epithets his days,
But from his lengthen'd labours hop'd to gain
Some present profit, or some future praise?

Though folly's self inspire each dead-born strain,
Still flattery prompts some blockhead to commend;
Perhaps e'en Timon hath not toil'd in vain,
Perhaps e'en Timon hath as dull a friend.

For thee, whose Muse with many an uncouth rhyme
Dost in these lines neglected worth bewail,
If chance (unknowing how to kill the time)
Some kindred idler should inquire thy tale;

Haply some ancient Fellow may reply—
'Oft have I seen him, from the dawn of day,
E'en till the western sun went down the sky,
Lounging his lazy, listless hours away:

'Each morn, he sought the cloister's cool retreat;
At noon, at Tom's he caught the daily lie,
Or from his window looking o'er the street,
Would gaze upon the travellers passing by;

'At night, encircled with a kindred band,
In smoke and ale roll'd their dull lives away;
True as the College-clock's unvarying hand,
Each morrow was the echo of to-day.

'Thus free from cares, and children, noise and wife,'
Pass'd his smooth moments; till, by fate's command,
A lethargy assail'd his harmless life,
And check'd his course, and shook his loitering sand.

'Where Merton's towers in Gothic grandeur rise,
And shed around each soph a deeper gloom,
Beneath the centre-aisle engrav'd he lies,
With these few lines interr'd upon his tomb?

THE EPITAPH.

Of vice, or virtue void; here rests a man,
By prudence taught each rude excess to shun;
Nor love nor pity marr'd his sober plan,
And Dullness claim'd him for her favourite son.

By no eccentric passion led astray,
Nor rash to blame, nor eager to commend,
Calmly through life he steer'd his quiet way,
Nor made an enemy, nor gain'd a friend.

Seek not his faults—his merits—to explore,
But quickly drop this uninstructive tale:
His works—his faults—his merits are no more,
Sunk in the gloom of dark oblivion's veil.

* Vice-Admiral Tyrrel's monument in Westminster-Abbey.

PUBLIC AMUSEMENTS.

THE THEATRES.

DRURY LANE.

WHILST astronomers are watching the appearance of new comets in the sky, we rejoice at being able to announce the return of one, the length of whose period had not as yet been ascertained. Its eccentricity is so considerable, that it requires ages to run through every point of its orbit. It appeared under the reign of Augustus, in the time of Leo the Tenth, was visible in Shakspeare's days, and is known under the appellation of "*Public Taste.*" We remarked it for the first time at this Theatre,

when Mr. Skeffington's *Mysterious Bride* was acted; and the influence which it exercised over the condemnation of this piece, almost convinced us that ancient astrologers were not so mistaken in their notions on the virtues of stars, as they are generally supposed to be. Fearful lest we had been deceived by the spells of hope, which embody wishes into reality, we continued to watch attentively for the re-appearance of this planet; and two nights afterwards had the pleasure of seeing it blazing forth during the first representation of a musical afterpiece, called *The Fortune Teller*. Its influence seemed to have increased, rather than diminished; for this miserable afterpiece was most justly and completely damned, after a fairer hearing than any other condemned play can boast. A slight sketch of its plot will convince the public, and the author himself, if an author be open to conviction on such occasions, that its total want of merit alone was the cause of its fall.

A young lady of fortune falls in love with a soldier, wins his affections under a disguise, hires a room in his father's house (which is situated on her own estate, till then left to the care of an ambitious and unjust steward), and forms an intimacy with her lover'r sister, who is ignorant of her rank. The soldier and his regiment pass through the neighbourhood; his mistress assumes the dress of a fortune-teller; meets him on his way, tells him that he is born to be rich, mentions the name of *Emma*, under which he had known her, as that of his future wife, and leaves him in astonishment. She then writes to her steward, that she intends to repair to her country seat that same evening. He orders his son (a country booby, whom he had sent in vain to London to quicken his wits) to put on his new suit of clothes, and display all his charms, to gain both her heart and her hand. The young man, probably to look more genteel, gets drunk, seeks the soldier's sister in her own cottage, and whilst running after her to kiss her, is locked up in a room. The lady arrives; the steward, who cannot find his son, sets out at night, with a servant, to seek him. They hear him breaking open a door, and lead him home, still intoxicated. The soldier comes to visit his sister, and repairs with her to the lady of the manor, to complain of the Steward's son's behaviour. There they find the latter cursing the tightness of his boots, and trying to recover from the embarrassment in which his introduction to the lady had plunged him. The soldier knows his *Emma*; who, we suppose, declares her intention of marrying him; for the avenging hisses at last burst forth, and the curtain dropped, amidst the thundering shouts of, Off! Off! from every part of the theatre.

The music was pretty, but could boast little novelty. Several tunes sounded in our ears as though lately imported from France. The actors exerted all their abilities; but the most violent blasts could not force a leaden kite to fly.

On the 4th of October, Mrs. Orger, from Edinburgh, made her first appearance at Drury Lane, in the part of *Lydia Languish*, in *The Rivals*. If ease of manners, elegance of shape, a handsome countenance, an almost infantine simplicity of tone, and a modest propriety of action, entitle a performer to applause, Mrs. Orger's reception was not more favourable than she deserved. If she do not rise to superior eminence in her profession, she will always rank high above mediocrity. The same night Elliston assumed, for the first time, the part of *Captain Absolute*, which Barrymore's defection had fortunately left vacant, and which had never been so well performed before.

On the 17th, the comedy of *The Busy Body* was acted, and the grand Romance of *Blue Beard* revived. Before the rising of the curtain, Mr. Putnam apologized for Mr. Bannister's absence, rendered unavoidable by a domestic calamity, and announced that Mr. Lewis, of Covent Garden Theatre, would fill up his part in the *Busy Body*, and that Mr. Mathews would become his substitute in that of *Shacabac*, in *Blue Beard*. The latter was however filled by Mr. Penley. Mr. Lewis was greeted with loud and deserved applause, and Mr. Penley displayed great excellence in *Shacabac*, a character which he had assumed at a very short notice. The mechanist seemed intoxicated, probably with the fumes of ambition, or led away by the wish of shining as an original genius, for he displayed the strangest and most novel variety of scenes that we had ever beheld. Now a wide-spreading oak intruded into a dining-room, and now part of a chimney, with a grand piano, and two or three pillars, placed themselves in the midst of a wood. The galleries, who have no taste for novelty, hissed most tremendously; but, conscious of his own merit, the mechanist despised popular clamour, and continued to delight and astonish the audience with the pleasing incongruity of his scenes.

Several dramatic critics have exclaimed against the revival of *Blue Beard*, as little suitable to the dignity of Drury Lane Theatre. We do not perceive any thing degrading in

bringing once more upon the stage, pieces and grand spectacles which are really worthy to meet the public glance. Will not the prospect which we had often admired during our residence in the country, strike us as possessing new charms, when we behold it anew, after a long absence of five or six years? The scenery, dresses, and processions in *Blue Beard* were truly splendid; and Mr. J. Smith, who personated Selim, presented a rare phœnomenon on the stage, a tasteful singer, not deficient in action and spirit.

OPERA HOUSE.

This Theatre has not produced any novelty this month; and it cannot reasonably be expected, that the Managers, however desirous to deserve the patronage of the public, should perform impossibilities. New plays require new changes of scenery; and the labours of the artist cannot equal in rapidity the wishes of the community. A melo-drama has however made its *first* appearance at this House; but as it is merely a copy of an unsuccessful play of Mr. Skeffington's, acted three nights, and damned the fourth, we conceive that it cannot lay claim to novelty. Whilst witnessing its representation, we wondered how it was possible, that Mr. Dibdin, the author of the melodrama in question, entitled, *Princess, or no Princess*, unless he were an expert short-hand writer, should have been able to take down the speeches of Mr. Skeffington's heroes, so exactly, word for word,. Our astonishment vanished, when we learned that this silly piece, became the bone of contention between the most *fashionable* and the most *witty* writers of modern nonsense, was, after all, only a translation from the French. This intelligence removed a heavy burden of contempt, that threatened to crush the grovelling fame of both these authors; and vindicated the honesty of Mr. Dibdin's muse, that committed depredations only where the laws of war made pillage lawful on an enemy's stage. With fewer claims to indulgence, he proved more successful than his predecessor, and *Princess and no Princess* continues to attract crowded houses, whilst *The Mysterious Bride* lies buried,—its grave, oblivion,—hisses loud, its dirge.

On the 12th of this month, Miss Norton, for the first time, assumed the character of *Portia*, in *The Merchant of Venice*. Notwithstanding the talents which she displayed, she could not drive the recollection of Miss Smith's superior abilities from our minds. As long as the character does not rise above the level of feminine graces and accomplishments, Miss Norton had perhaps the advantage; but when she assumes, with the disguise, the manly spirit and solemnity of a judge, Miss Smith remained unrivalled.

ELEGANCIES OF FASHION FOR NOVEMBER.

THE chilling blasts of winter hastening to supersede the mild freshness of the autumnal evenings, and the *Steyne*, the *Parade*, and the hoarse-resounding Beach, will soon be deserted for the Opera, the ball-room, or the cheerful domestic fire-side. The almost universality of half-dress, so convenient and proper at a watering-place, will, therefore, soon be laid aside for the more dashing and eccentric elegancies of fashion; and the purveyors of the different articles of female *ornament*, for we cannot call it *attire*, are all on the *qui vive* to bring out the *newest thing*.

The pelisse of scarlet cloth, and the velvet mantle, of course, are the most conspicuous articles for *winter* wear, in order to give the appearance of warmth, if they do not produce its reality; and as last winter they were worn *on one shoulder*, we may fairly expect, for the coming season, that it will be sufficient to carry them *on the arm*, unless some dashing female should wrap her fur cloak round the broad shoulders of her attendant footman, in order *to keep herself warm* by proxy. In these articles, it is intended by the arbiters of fashion, that neatness and a tasteful fancy shall render all gaudy ornaments unnecessary; and we understand that an Andalusian vest and cloak, *unique in this country at least*, will be sported by the goddesses of our promenades, in honour of our southern allies. This simple and *comfortable* dress, so interesting when on the voluptuous yet graceful forms of the Andalusian *Paysannes*, consists of a short and full mantle of dark brown cloth or kerseymere, with a vest of the same materials, fitted with long sleeves, and trimmed with a narrow binding of the same colours; the vest is worn close to the form, and fastens close up to the neck, being ornamented with a profusion of silk buttons in front

and at the wrists. At present the short gipsey cloaks, made of fine scarlet cloth, very different to those of last winter, seem to have many admirers.

Those who are partial to furs as a trimming, or merely for shew, will adopt the Northern costume, and with them the Lapland Jacket will have its day. This consists of a close-bodied dress of ruby-coloured or scarlet superfine cloth, or sarsenet, reaching half way to the knees, with a high open collar, and trimmed all round with the richest spoils of Siberia.—It may be worn over a morning dress of any appropriare colour, or contrast, surmounted with a white tippet, and accompanied, or not, by a muff, according to the fancy of the wearer.

With the Andalusian costume, the *Montero* cap of the southern parts of Spain, would be a proper accompaniment, but as it might be thought to bear too close a resemblance to a fool's cap, our wise folks will of course *dispense with it*, in order to avoid mistakes, and content themselves with a small round bonnet of the same colour and materials as the mantle, chastely ornamented with ribband tassels.—With the Lapland jacket it has been proposed to introduce the high Siberian fur cap, formed square on the top, and gradually increasing in size as it rises from the head.

The in-door morning costume will be more striking from its tasteful simplicity, than from its style of ornament. The muslin cap, as usual, will hold its place at the breakfast-table, and the hair modestly dressed, will as usual grace the morning drawing-room. In carriages the moss straw hat, or the cottage bonnet.

In full dress, nothing very striking is on the *tapis*, nor will the regulators of the mode produce any thing *very* dashing until the birth-day, as the late meeting of Parliament will operate rather as a check on an early opening of the fashionable campaign.

Black, from its interesting appearance, it is expected will be a favourite; this will be of flowered Italian gauze, worn over muslin or white sarsnet, and either trimmed with rich laces, or with a light ornamented edging of the simplest flowers in silk embroidery. The plainest Grecian costume for the hair will be all the *ton*, set off with such simple ornaments as fancy may dictate; these will consist principally in wreaths of flower and silver foil, or diadems formed of several turns of silver cord, with one or two silver stars placed negligently over the left temple. Necklaces and bracelets of the antique will be worn, but not by the *very youngest* of Fashion's votaries.

The male costume will, as usual, be more elegant in neatness than in ornament: blue and the darkest brown or green, with white marseilles waistcoats, and breeches of silk or of drab-coloured kerseymere, will be quite the thing in the early part of the season; nor will the olive or any of the lighter colours make their appearance till the Spring. For morning wear, the stocking web pantaloons, either dark blue, drab colour, or a mixture, with short Hessian boots, will in general accompany the blue morning coat, though it is expected that a dark grey morning coat will also become fashionable. These will be cut rather short in the skirts, and higher in the collar, with buttons on the sleeves the same as the coat, or of the *basket kind*, which has not yet lost its attraction—the barrel buttons also are in fashionable estimation.

MONTHLY RETROSPECT.

Ill-fated race!—how deeply must they rue
Their only crime, vicinity to you!
The trumpet sounds, your legions swarm abroad
* * * * * * * * *
What are ye, monarchs, laurel'd heroes, say,
But Etnas of the suffering World ye sway?—*Cowper.*

EVERY body knows that Spain has gloriously resisted the tyranny of her invader, and alike triumphed over his arts and his arms. If, then, adopting the system of the poet, who triumphantly asks—

"What can we *reason* but from what we *know*,"

if what is to come is to be conjectured from what is past, scarcely any apprehension can be entertained as to the ultimate and decisive success of the Spanish Patriots. Delightful as is this anticipation, fondly as the heart clings to it, strongly as reason ratifies it, I feel an al-

most unaccountable hesitation about every thing connected with this hope of the nations. The man who has not forgotten Tilsit, will look anxiously towards Erfurth!!

Consistent, but not too confident, let us, while we wish the best, be also prepared for the worst. Precaution is not so much our error as is exultation. Foreigners mistake us, when they task us with our prudence; for there is no people more ardent and sanguine than we are, concerning whatever happens to interest us strongly. We, in fact, expect nothing but success. It is this expectation that it behoves us judiciously to regulate.

Well! "two special Messengers have really arrived from—Erfurth." What can this mean? Why, our sapient diurnalists are all in the secret; and immediately, without waiting for any communication from their government, anticipated these dispatches. I am not certain, however, that ministers will acquire any real information, as to the imperial conferences, from this "Flag of Truce;" but I do most cordially hope, notwithstanding existing obstacles, that

"The King hath note of all that they intend,
"By interception which they dream not of!!
King Henry 5, Scene 2.

The still misunderstood Convention of Cintra has afforded citizen Waithman, who is avowedly prone "to indulge his genius"

"By diving into cabinet intrigue,"

another notable occasion for the display of his patriotic vigilance and oratorical fluency. This gentleman manages the business of a common-hall, on common concerns, almost as commendably as that of a counting-house: and deals out his eloquence with as much satisfaction as his drapery. It must be regretted, therefore, that such transcendant exertions should not be invariably successful. Alack, it was practicable enough to assail Mellish; but, in truth and in deed, it was quite another affair to meddle with—Majesty! Lord Hawkesbury, if I am rightly informed, read the King's most gracious Answer to their Address and Petition, with such an air as nearly overpowered the whole Body of the City. His lordship, indeed, has sometimes a bite of the brow, a searching scrutiny, that fitted him for the part allotted to him on this occasion. So far all is well. British Ministers, however, may do well to consider the character of *British Subjects*,

"Patient of constitutional controul,
"Who bear it with meek manliness of soul;"

and not attempt, in any case, to goad patience beyond the natural boundaries of forbearance.

If the Address to the Throne was singular, the Answer to the City was equally so; if the one is indignantly vehement, the other is sarcastically laconic. The address professes the utmost loyalty, and the answer archly admits the truth of the profession. Our citizens express "grief and astonishment" at transactions which the sovereign confesses to "have disappointed the hopes and expectations of the nation." Where, then, is the disagreement?—Not as to the failure, but the interference. His Majesty just "reminds" his faithful citizens of London, of an "inconsistency" that had been in vain pointed out to them by some judicious members of their own body!

Resolved not to be foiled in every quarter, the good Governors of London now turned their attention from generals to dogs; and a most tremendous proclamation did the Monarch of the City issue, on the 15th of October, forbidding Dogs "to go into or *perambulate* any of the public streets." I at first conceived there might be some error in the affair; and that, instead of *mad* dogs, they were merely *sad* dogs, with which our metropolis often abounds, against whom such precaution had been so laudably exerted. Perambulating puppies and despairful dogs, however, are the real objects of this civic solicitude. Many of them have doubtless been extirminated, and their surviving species pretty well pounded, in consequence of the mayor's proclamation. Doleful tidings for dogs! It is pity, notwithstanding, that this biting insanity should confine itself to our dogs; since if one only of our generals would go mad, and bite the rest of them, the consequences to the country might be incalculably beneficial. Who knows what results might happen, if, for instance, Sir Arthur were to bite Sir Hew and Sir Harry, and either of these were immediately to bite the Commander in Chief? It is a royal remedy; being prescribed by no less a personage than George the Second, of happy memory?

Sir Arthur Wellesley, it is proper to observe, declares that he had neither part nor lot in the Convention of Cintra.—Poor Sir Hew! what contention has his conduct excited? Ten towns are said to have disputed the honour of having given birth to Homer; but as to this Commander, so he is at present disclaimed by all parties, that two countries have been wrangling, during some weeks past, each to clear itself from the imputation of his being generated in either!! Scotland asserts that he is not a

Scotsman, and Yorkshire denies him to be a Yorkshireman. Where will the stigma be found to attach? Suppose after all, Sir Hew should turn out to be a proper Englishman; even though this "island of England breeds very valiant creatures, and our mastiffs are of unmatchable courage."

Among other extraordinaries, is the following transaction; which I find thus detailed, in the Evangelical Magazine. "Many hundred copies of the New Testament," says the Number for last October, p. 451, "in the Spanish language, were distributed among the Spanish prisoners just before their leaving this country. It may be hoped that they will all reach Spain, and many of them fall into hands that will know their value, or will learn it from the perusal of that holy book." If Mr. Kemble deserved arraignment, at the public bar, for representing the play of *Pizarro*, under existing circumstances, what will be thought of these Evangelical Reformers, as Englishmen, when it is discovered, by those allies to whose opinions our greatest tragedian was compelled to succumb;—what, I ask, will the Spaniards say, when they shall learn, as they soon must learn, that our puritans have been industriously employing the most effectual means for indisposing the Spaniards to their Religion? This is the way in which our pious patriots have chosen to demonstrate national hospitality. What, however, is the Monarchy, without the Priesthood of Spain? All her prelates are patriots, and her patriots have abundant cause to be grateful for the exertions of their prelates. Where is the honest man, if not insane, who would desire so see this harmony interrupted? To what extremes will the madness of proselytism urge men who are otherwise reasonable!

Mr. Sheridan (an accurate, and elegantly engraved, portrait of whom—I wish it had been taken in Westminster Hall!—embellishes the present Number of *Le Beau Monde*) has again presented himself to notice. Nothing dismayed at the reception experienced by the City of London, that of Westminster determined to follow the example of the former. Sir Francis Burdett did not grace the meeting with his presence. He, if one may believe panegyrical news-writers, was, "like a good son," attending the sick-bed of his political father! John Horne Tooke was dying—Sir Francis Burdett could not consent to be seen among the living.

Alas, for Richard Brinsley Sheridan! The Friend of Fox, and opponent of Pitt, is descended to a level with paragraph politicians and public-house orators, with the Finnertys and Powers of the day!!! He is now, as Mr. Burke called it, on the pavement; asking, where he ought to have aspired, and soliciting where he ought to have succeeded. His day, I fear, is past. Profession will not again be accepted for patriotism; and it is too late for him to repair the errors he committed on the death of Mr. Fox. Lord Percy is not yet forgotten—Sir Samuel Hood is still remembered.

When, however, we are talking of Addresses and Answers, it may be as well to contrast Britain with America; to compare *regius* with *regime*, republicanism with royalty. Let any dispassionate and unjaundiced mind, read his Majesty's Answer to the City of London, together with President Jefferson's Reply to the Petition of the City of Boston; and then let such individual, laying his hand conscientiously upon his breast, declare—whether he would wish to exchange the condition of an Englishman for that of an American? Well indeed does one of our contemporary poets, who calls himself Hafiz, exclaim—

Columbia! hast thou ears, to hear?
Columbia! hast thou eyes, to see?
Is Independence, to thee, dear;
And dear the name of Liberty?
* * * * * * * *
Be not cajol'd by treacherous Gaul,
Pin not thy faith on falshood's sleeve!—
By Europe's folly, Europe's fall,
Learn whom to doubt, whom to believe.

America, I repeat it, and—were I yankee—I would sound it, through all her states, as the dirge of her departing glory, AMERICA MUST BEWARE OF FRANCE, AND OF FRANCE ONLY!

October 26, 1808. NEMO.

BIRTHS, MARRIAGES, AND DEATHS.

BIRTHS.

At his house, in Grafton-street, the Lady of Viscount Hinchingbrook, of a daughter.

At Wincolmlee, Yorkshire, the wife a labouring man, of two girls and a boy, who, with the mother, are likely to live.

At Gloucester-street, Portman-square, the Lady of the Rev. Alex. Cotton, of a son.

At Lanstephan, the Lady of Thomas Morris, Esq. Banker, Carmarthen, of a son.

The Lady of Major-General Loft, M. P. of a daughter.

At Stockwell, the Lady of Captain James Tweedale, of a daughter.

At Blair Adam, the seat of William Adam, Esq. M. P. Mrs. Anstruther Thomson, Lady of John Anstruther Thomson, Esq. of Charleton, of a daughter.

The Lady of Sir Thomas Gibson Carmichael, of Skirling, Bart. of a daughter, at Castle Craig, Scotland.

At Woolwich, the Lady of Lieut.-Colonel Robe, of the Royal Artillery, of a daughter.

At Ashford, Kent, the Lady of Dr. Wilmot, of a daughter.

MARRIAGES.

At the Abbey Church, Bath, the Rev. Archdeacon Phillot, to the Right Hon. Lady A. St. Lawrence, sister of the Earl of Howth and Viscountess Sydney.

At St. James's Church, John Drayton, Esq. of Cheltenham, Banker, to Miss Wells, of that place.

At St. Martin's in the Fields, Mr. Blanchard, of the King's Theatre in the Haymarket, to Miss Harrold, eldest daughter of Mr. Harrold, of the Wrekin Tavern, Broad-court.

At Parkham, Sussex, the Hon. Robert Curson, son of Viscount Curson, and Member of Parliament for Clithero, to Miss Bishopp, daughter of Sir Cecil Bishopp, Bart.

At Dumaget, in the county of Wigtown, North Britain, Lieut. Leveson Douglas Stewart, of the Royal Navy, second surviving son of the late Hon. Admiral Keith Stewart, of Glasserton, to Miss Elizabeth Dalrymple Hay, third daughter of Sir John Dalrymple Hay, Bart. of Park-place, Glenluce.

Lately, Capt. Forrest, of Busfield, Berks, to Mary, eldest daughter of Colonel James Lowther, M. P. for the county of Westmoreland.

DEATHS.

MR. PROFESSOR PORSON.

On Sunday, the 25th of September, Mr. Professor Porson. On the Monday following his remains were removed from the house of the London Institution, in order to be deposited in Trinity College Chapel, Cambridge. The Directors of the Institution ordered the house to be shut for the day, and the Under Librarians and other Officers assisted in the solemnity.—The procession from London consisted of four mourning coaches, followed by six private carriages: and the persons who attended him were his relatives and most intimate friends. At half after two o'clock on Tuesday afternoon, the hearse arrived at Trinity College, Cambridge, and was received at the great gate, and conveyed to the Hall, where the body lay in state till five o'clock, at which the Lord Bishop of Bristol, Master of the College, the Vice Master, Senior and Junior Fellows, Batchelors of Arts, Scholars, and other Members resident in the University, in their academical habits, and in black scarfs, bands, and gloves, walked from the Combination Room, accompanied by the Chief Mourners, into the Hall; and after moving round the body, they took their seats, the Chief Mourners being placed on the right hand and left of the Master. Upon the Pall, several *Epitaphs* in Greek and English verse, the effusions of reverential respect for his high attainments, and of love for his virtues, were placed on the Pall, and were read with the most sympathetic interest by his former Associates in Study. An Anthem was chanted by the Choir. After which the body was raised by the bearers, and a most solemn procession was made round the great quadrangle of the College, from the Hall to the Chapel. On entering the Chapel, which was illuminated, the Choir performed an Anthem. After which the Lord Bishop read the lesson, and the procession moved to the grave, which was at the foot of the statue of Sir Isaac Newton, and surrounded by those of all the illustrious persons which this great and distinguished College has produced. When they had taken their stations around the grave, and the body was placed above it ready for interment, the funeral Anthem was performed by the Choir in the adjoining Chapel, during the most perfect silence of the auditory, and with the most solemn effect. The service was then read by the Lord

Bishop with an awful, dignified, and impressive pathos. He was himself overwhelmed as he proceeded by his feelings; and he communicated the sympathetic emotion to every listening friend of the deceased.

The following was the simple inscription engraved in brass on his coffin:—

RICARDUS · PORSON ·
APUD · CANTABRIGIENSES ·
LINGUAE · GRAECAE · PROFESSOR ·
ET ·
COLL. · TRIN. · S. · S. · ET · IND. · OLIM.
SOCIUS · APUD · LONDINENSES ·
INSTITUTIONIS · LITTERARIAE ·
BIBLIOTHECARIUS · PRINCEPS ·
NATUS · VIII. · CAL. · IAN. · MDCCLX ·
OBIIT. · VII. · CAL. · OCT. ·
MDCCCVIII.

Mr. Professor Porson was born at East Ruston, in Norfolk, on Christmas day, 1759; so that he was only in his 49th year. Every thing about this most eminent scholar, and particularly the circumstances which laid the foundation of that most inestimable memory, by which he was enabled to store his mind with all the riches of literature, will become interesting to the world. He owed the blessing to the care and judgment of his father, Mr. Huggin Porson, who was Parish Clerk of East Ruston, and who, though in humble life, and without the advantages himself of early education, laid the basis of his son's unparalleled acquirements. From the earliest dawn of intellect, Mr. Porson began the task of fixing the attention of his children, three sons and a daughter, and he had taught Richard, his eldest son, all the common rules of arithmetic, without the use of a book or slate, pen or pencil, up to the cube root, before he was nine years of age. The memory was thus incessantly exercised; and by this early habit of working a question in arithmetic by the mind only, he acquired such a talent of close and intense thinking, and such a power of arranging every operation that occupied his thought, as in process of time to render the most difficult problems, which to other men required the assistance of written figures, easy to the retentive faculties of his memory. He was initiated in letters by a process equally efficacious. His father taught him to read and write at one and the same time. He drew the form of the letter either with chalk on a board, or with the finger in sand; and Richard was made at once to understand and imitate the impression. As soon as he could speak he could trace the letters; and this exercise delighting his fancy, an ardour of imitating whatever was put before him was excited to such a degree, that the walls of the house were covered with characters which attracted notice, from their neatness and fidelity of delineation. At nine years of age, he and his youngest brother, Thomas, were sent to the village school, kept by a Mr. Summers, who professed nothing beyond English, writing and arithmetic. He perfected the Professor in that talent of writing, in which he so peculiarly excelled; but which we are doubtful whether it was to be considered as an advantage or a detriment to him in his progress through life. It certainly had a considerable influence on his habits, and made him devote many precious moments to copying which might have been better employed in composition. It has been the means, however, of enriching his library with annotations, in a text the most beautiful, and with such perfect imitation of the original manuscript or printing, as to embellish every work which his erudition enabled him to elucidate. He continued under Mr. Summers for three years; and every evening during that time he had to repeat by heart, to his father, the lessons and the tasks of the day; and this not in a loose or desultory manner, but in the rigorous order, in which whatever he had been occupied about had been done; and thus again the process of recollection was cherished and strengthened, so as to become a quality of his mind. It was impossible that such a youth should remain unnoticed, even in a place so obscure as East Ruston. The Rev. Mr. Hewitt heard of his extraordinary propensities to study, his gift of attention to whatever was taught him, and the wonderful fidelity with which he retained whatever he had acquired. He took him and his brother Thomas under his care, and instructed them in the classics. The progress of both was great, but that of Richard was most extraordinary. It became the topic of astonishment beyond the district, and when he had reached his 14th year, had engaged the notice of all the gentlemen in the vicinity. Among others, he was mentioned as a prodigy to an opulent and liberal man, the late Mr. Norris, who, after having put the youth under an examination of the severest kind, and from which an ordinary boy would have shrunk dismayed, he was sent to Eton.—This happened in August, 1774, when he was in his 15th year: and in that great seminary he from the commencement of his career displayed such a superiority of intellect; such facility of acquirement; such quickness of perception, and such a talent of bringing forward to his purpose all that he had ever read, that the upper boys

took him into their society, and promoted the cultivation of his mind by their lessons, as well, probably, as by imposing upon him the performance of their own exercises. He was courted by them as the never-failing resource in every difficulty; and in all the playful excursions of the imagination, in their frolics, as well as in their serious tasks, Porson was the constant adviser and support. He used to dwell on this lively part of his youth with peculiar complacency. We fear, however, that at this early age his constitution received a shock, which was soon after aggravated by the death of his worthy patron. An imposthume formed on his lungs, and he was threatened by a consumption. But it fortunately broke, and he recovered his health, though his frame was weakened. The death of Mr. Norris was the source of severe mortification to him; for though by the kindness of some eminent and liberal persons he was continued at Eton, he felt the loss he had sustained in the most poignant degree. He was entered of Trinity College towards the end of 1777. In every branch of study to which he applied himself, his course was so rapid as to astonish every competent observer. By accident he was drawn first to read in mathematics, in which, from his early exertions, he was eminently calculated to shine, but from which he drew no benefit; and then by the prospect of a scholarship, which, however, did not become vacant till long after, he sat down to the classics. In this pursuit he soon acquired undisputed pre-eminence. He got the medal of course, and was elected a Fellow in 1781. In 1785 he took his degree of Master of Arts: but long before that period had elapsed, when he must either enter into holy orders, or surrender his Fellowship, he had (after the most grave and deliberate investigation) made up his mind on the subject of subscription His heart and mind were deeply penetrated by the purest sentiments of religion; and it was a memorable and most estimable feature of his character, that in no moment the most unguarded was he ever known to utter a single expression of discontent at the establishment, of derision at those who thought differently from himself, much less of profanation or impiety. So early as 1788, he had made up his mind to surrender his fellowship, though with an enfeebled constitution he had nothing to depend upon but acquirements that are very unprofitable to their owner. In 1791, his fellowship ceased, and he was thrown upon the world without a profession, his feelings wounded by the mortifications he had suffered, and with a constitution little qualified to encounter the bustle of the world. Some private friends, however, stept in, and soon after he was elected Greek Professor of Cambridge, by an unanimous vote of the seven electors. The distinction of this appointment was grateful to him. The salary is but 40*l.* a-year. From this time he turned his thoughts to publication. His letters to Mr. Archdeacon Travis, as has been truly said, put the controversy on the disputed text to rest; and indeed it was the peculiar felicity of his mind, that whatever he undertook to elucidate, he fixed for ever in the light. In 1795, he married Mrs. Lunan, the sister of Mr. Perry, of *The Morning Chronicle*, but who sunk under a decline in April, 1797, and from that time the Professor himself was so incessantly afflicted with a spasmodic asthma, as to interrupt him in every study to which he applied himself. Whether his sedentary habits served to bring it on we know not, but certainly very few men had accustomed themselves to such patient and continued toil. He had undertaken to make out and copy the almost obliterated manuscript of the invaluable Lexicon of Rhotius, which he had borrowed from the Library of Trinity College. And this he had with unparalleled difficulty just completed, when the beautiful copy which had cost him ten months of incessant toil, was burnt in the house of Mr. Perry, at Merton. The original being an *unique*, entrusted to him by his College, he carried with him wherever he went; and he was fortunately absent from Merton on the morning of the fire. Unruffled by the loss, he sat down without a murmur, and made a second copy as beautiful as the first. It is extant in his library, and is quite ready for the press. Of the plays of Euripides, which he published, the learned world has pronounced its judgment. He has left an Orestes also ready for the press. On the establishment of the London Institution, the Managers manifested their love of letters, by selecting him to be their principal Librarian, an appointment for which he was peculiarly qualified, and if time and health had been allowed him, he would have made their Library truly valuable. His own, which he had been gradually collecting for 30 years, he has enriched by annotations of such value and importance to literature, that we hope and trust the whole will be placed in his own College, that it may for ever be within the reach of those whom his example may arouse to similar pursuits, though they may despair of reaching equal attainments. Mr. Porson had, for the last seven years, been the

incessant victim of spasmodic asthmas, during the agony of which he never went to bed, and in which he was forced to abstain from all sustenance. This greatly debilitated his body; and about a month before his decease he was afflicted by an intermittent fever; he had an objection to medical advice, and he resorted to his usual remedy of abstinence; but on Monday the 19th ult. he sufferyd an apoplectic stroke, from which he recovered only to endure a second attack the next day. He languished to the Sunday night, and expired without a struggle. The body was opened by his medical men, and they have given a report, ascribing his death "to the effused lymph in and upon the brain, which they believe to have been the effect of recent inflammation. The heart was sound, and the pericardium contained the usual quantity of lymph. The left lung had adhesions to the pleura, and bore the marks of former inflammation. The right lung was in a perfectly sound state." This is signed by Dr. Babington, Sir William Blizard, Mr. Norris, Mr. Blizard, and Mr. Upton. In refutation of an idle falsehood about the form of his skull, they add, "that it was thinner than usual and of hard consistence."

Lately, at Calcutta, Capt. Thomas Henry Spence, late of the Diamond frigate, universally lamented. The deceased was brother-in-law to Weippert, the celebrated performer on the harp, of the Theatre Royal, Covent Garden, and Drury Lane.

At the Court Lodge, Appledore, Kent, where she was on a visit, Mrs. Dent, aged 68, widow of the late Rev. Samuel Dent, of the Island of Grenada; she was aunt to the late Rev. Joseph Dent Gilmore, who died at the Court Lodge on the 17th ult. They came to the Court Lodge to spend a few weeks in comfort; and both died in one month.

On his passage home from the Havannah, with important dispatches to Government, Col. Charles Williamson.

At Little Bank, near Settle, in her 98th year, Mrs. Alice Atkinson, one of the people called Quakers.

At West Ham, Essex, James Anderson, LL. D. of Maunic, Aberdeenshire; he was the author of several works on Agriculture, Political Economy, and other interesting subjects.

At Liverpool, full of years and good works, Mrs. Johnson, relict of Samuel Johnson, Esq. counsellor at law, and of the last surviving daughter of Hamon L'Estrange, Esq. of the ancient house of L'Estrange, of Hunstanton.—This venerable lady was born in the year 1712.

Lately, in Dublin, at an advanced age, the Marquis of Clanricarde. He was a General in the army; and, by his death, the Colonelcy of the 66th Regiment becomes vacant. He was also Governor of Hull, and *Custos Rotulorum* of the county of Galway.

At Ross House, county of Tipperary, the Rev. Robert Peacock, aged 68. He was near forty years Rector and Chancellor of Kilferora, and served the curacy of the church forty-nine.

In Hans-place, Sloane-street, Mrs. Cowell, wife of Lieutenant-Colonel Cowell, late of the First Battalion of the Royals.

At Kirktown of Auchterless, in the 99th year of his age, Mr. George Paterson, formerly merchant there.

At Glasgow, Dr. James M'Nayr.

At his house, at Bow, the Rev. Wm. James French, rector of Vangé, in Essex, and chaplain to the Elder Brethren of the Trinity.

At the venerable age of 93, the Rev. John Longdon, rector of Winston, in the county of Gloucester. He had constantly resided at the first-mentioned parish 66 years.

In Hill-street, Berkeley-square, Katherine Maria, wife of William Leveson Gower, Esq. heiress of the late Sir John Gresham, Bart. of Titsey-place, Surrey.

Lately, at Oxford, aged above 90 years, at the house of her son, the Rev. the Warden of All Souls College, Mrs. Isham, and mother of the present Sir Justinian Isham, Bart. of Lamport, Northamptonshire.

After a lingering and painful illness, Marianne, the wife of General the Right Hon. H. E. Fox, and sister of Sir William Clayton, Bart.

At his house, in Dunbar, Major-Gen. John Forbes, late in the service of the Hon. the East India Company.

Lately, Sam. Gillam Mills, Esq. of Groom's Hill, Greenwich.

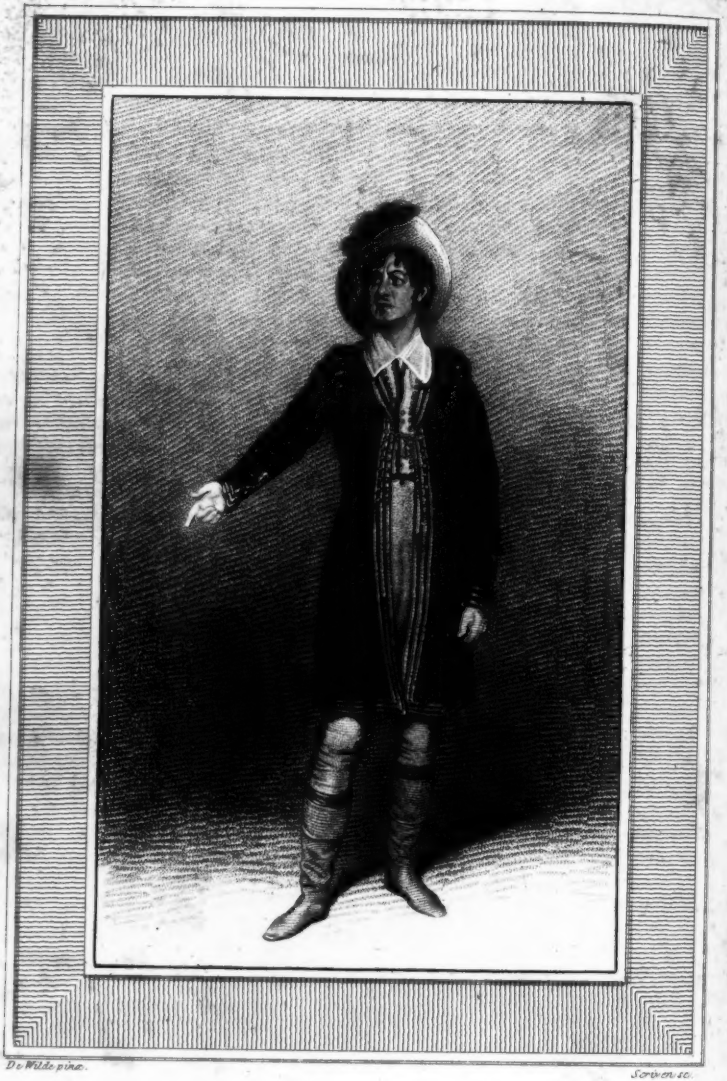
At Brighton, the Countess of Shipbrook, relict of Francis, Earl of Shipbrook.

At Warwick, in her 85th year, Mrs. Dorothy Mordaunt, the mother of Sir James Mordaunt, Bart. and aunt to the present Representative for Warwick.

At Roehampton, Miss A. K. Markham, sixth daughter of the late Archbishop of York.

At Wyham, near Louth, aged 41, John Grant, Esq. one of the most extensive farmers and graziers in Lincolnshire; having nearly 10,000 acres of land in occupation at the time of his death.

At Upwood, Dorsetshire, E. D. Batson, Esq. Banker, Lombard-street.



De Wilde pinx.

Scriven sc.

Mr. ELLISTON as DUKE ARANZA.

How well the fellow reproves me!

Honey Moon, Act III.

London, Published by & for Bell & Dc Camp. 11 Catherine Street, Strand, Nov. 1 1803.

DRAMATIC MEMOIRS AND CRITICISMS

OF EMINENT PERFORMERS.

LIFE OF MR. ROBERT WILLIAM ELLISTON, OF DRURY LANE THEATRE.

IT is generally thought, that versatility of talents is the bane of excellence; that the grasp of the mind is weakened, and consequently its operations less effective, when it seizes hold of many objects at once. The arguments brought forward to countenance this opinion, are almost all gathered from natural appearances. "Behold the mountain torrent," will the one exclaim, "as long as it is confined to its narrow "channel, it roars tumultuous, and rushes impetuously down, threatening to devour every "obstacle that stems its course: but no sooner "does it reach the valley, than it sinks into the "bosom of the earth, or spreads unnoticed into "a thousand noiseless rivulets." This comparison, however, proves the usefulness of a versatility of talents; since the torrent is represented as carrying terror and desolation along with its course, till it reach the plain, and divides itself into numerous streams; when it becomes useful and beneficent. "Look at the sun," says another, "alone, he fills the depths of "Heaven with his splendour, and who can vie "with his blaze? Can the night, with its "moon and its hosts of stars, boast equal light, "equal magnificence?" To this I answer, that the brilliancy of the sun is so great, as to shield it from close observation, and prevent us, unless armed with the glass of astronomers, from descrying its spots; the sight of which might weaken our admiration. I will say, too, that as the variety of tastes is as unbounded as that of features and complexions in mankind, many think that the dark blue fields of night, strewed with radiant constellations, each of which gives the idea of a sun, surrounded with a system of planets like our own, form a more sublime scene, than that of day, in which one object alone is conspicuous. "Enough! "enough!" my readers will exclaim, "we "do not want such reasonings now. We wish "to know the life of the favourite of a discerning public, Mr. Elliston, and you transport us to the banks of torrents, or fly away "with us (yourself the balloon) into the immensity of space. Let imagination wander "where she lists, judgment and truth are the "only guides which we now wish to follow." I humbly beg your pardon, my offended readers; I thought, that defending versatility of talents could not fail to please you, who have so often admired it on the stage; but as, whatever be our opinion, we are all *rather* inclined to fancy it is undoubtedly right, you perhaps think that praise would have suited the occasion better than a defence. At all events, I shall neither tire your patience, nor oppose your wishes any longer.

London is the birth-place of Robert William Elliston, the enchanter, deprived of whose power, Drury Lane Theatre would become a lonely wilderness, disturbed by the howlings of its possessors alone. He was born in the year 1774, and in the parish of Bloomsbury. His father, however, soon removed, on account of his business (being an eminent watch-maker) to Charles-street, Covent Garden, where he spent many years.

Our hero was intended for the church; and one of his uncles, the Reverend Dr. Elliston, the late Master of Sidney College, sent him, at the age of nine, to St. Paul's School. Here he studied for some time, with great assiduity; but in his sixteenth year, the applause which his public delivery of an English thesis obtained, caused him to think the stage would prove more suitable to his talents and his taste, than the church. He learned the part of *Pierre*, in *Venice Preserved*, and acted it at the Lyceum in the Strand, then a private theatre. His success alarmed his friends, and led them to remonstrate with him on the impropriety of his theatrical pursuits, whilst he ought to prepare himself for the sacred duties of a divine. A severe remonstrance proves in general a spur to youth to follow their own inclinations. The venturous schoolboy felt its sting, and, resolving to dedicate himself to the stage, set off for Bath, with a single companion, the only person who was apprised of his design. When he reached the end of his destination, he became clerk to a lottery-office, in order to support himself until he should be allowed to make his *debut*. The longed for opportunity occurred at last; he appeared as *Tressel*, in *Richard the Third*; and, notwithstanding the unimportance

of the part, was successful enough to attract the attention of the public, but not to procure an engagement from the Manager.

He, however, obtained a letter of recommendation for Mr. Tate Wilkinson, who engaged him for his theatre at York. But here he began to taste the bitters of a profession which he had embraced as the most pleasant, and being obliged to act the most trifling parts, as the higher characters were in the possession of others, he wrote a supplicating epistle to his uncle. The anger of parents and relations is always too nearly allied to regret and apprehension, not to yield to the first suggestions of love. The runaway was not only forgiven, but welcomed home with joy, and his views furthered by the interference of another of his uncles, Professor Martyn, and Dr. Farmer, who presented him to the editor of Shakspeare, the late George Stevens, Esq. This gentleman introduced him to Mr. Kemble, by whose advise he studied *Romeo*, being promised that when the building of Drury-Lane should be finished, he would be allowed to try his abilities in this character.

The length of time that elapsed before the opening of this house, exhausted his patience, or at least completely drained his purse. He applied to Mr. Dimond, manager of the Bath theatre, who engaged him instantly. In the year 1793 he made his second appearance in this city in the part of *Romeo*, and met with the most encouraging reception. Here, circumstances favoured his progress towards fame, and first revealed the versatility of his talents. Some of the chief performers being indisposed, at different times, he was entrusted with their characters, in which he soon surpassed them. His popularity rapidly increased; and when Drury-Lane was at last opened, he heard from his uncle, Professor Martyn, that the managers did not offer more than three pounds a week, for a three years engagement; he then accepted Mr. Dimond's proposals, which were far more liberal.

Our young performer had scarcely reached his twenty-second year, when Miss Rundall, a lady whose beauty won general admiration, and who instructed a large number of pupils of her own sex in the secrets of Terpsichore's graceful art, consented to become indissolubly his. Notwithstanding her marriage, she continued to give lessons of dancing, and still ranks high in her profession.

Having promised Mr. Colman to assist him with his talents at the Haymarket theatre, Mr. Elliston tore himself from the arms of his wife before his honey-moon was over, and appeared for the first time in London at the Haymarket, the 24th of June, 1796, in the character of *Octavian*, in the *Mountaineers*, and performed the part of *Vapour* in *My Grandmother*, the same evening. His success equalled his deserts; and he would have *then* become a favourite in London, had not his engagement with Mr. Dimond recalled him instantly to Bath, to finish his summer career. Mr. Colman, however, secured his assistance for the remainder of the season.

The condemnation of *The Iron Chest* at Drury-Lane, had deeply wounded the feelings of its author, the manager of the Haymarket. Desirous to regain the fame he had lost, he resolved it should be represented at his own theatre. Full of confidence in the powers of his newly-engaged performer, he requested him to act the part of *Sir Edward Mortimer*, which even Mr. Kemble's great talents had not been able to save from the rage of an hissing audience. His expectations were not deceived—success crowned his piece, and his reputation as an author was restored to popularity by the exertions of the actor. Mr. Elliston distinguished himself also during the same season as the representative of *Sheva* in the *Jew*.

Attracted by the rising celebrity of our hero in the metropolis, Mr. Harris engaged him to play at Covent-Garden at certain intervals only, as his presence was required at Bath.—The consent of the managers of this city's theatre was obtained, and Mr. Elliston became a shuttlecock, which Bath and London sent to each other at regular periods. His brother performers, whose jealousy was awakened by the indulgence allowed to him alone, lost no opportunity of turning him into ridicule. He was called "the Telegraph, or fortnight actor," and at last disgust led him to request Mr. Harris to dissolve the engagement they had made.

Mr. Colman was at this period forming a company of the best performers belonging to the country theatres. He engaged Mr. Elliston for three years, put him in possession of all the best characters in the Drama, and made him stage-manager. His fame continued to rise so rapidly, that it soon reached the throne itself, and the royal family frequently sent their commands for a particular play, on particular nights, on purpose to encourage and admire the young actor. Indefatigable in his exertions, he laboured incessantly to render himself more worthy of the popularity which he had acquired. Conscious of the versatility of his ta-

lents, he increased the list of his characters, a few of which we will mention. *Sir Edward Mortimer, Octavian, Abednego, Walter, Sheva, Doctor Pangloss, Henry V. Young Wilding, Ben Block, Captain Beldair,* &c. &c.

This astonishing display of superior excellence had excited the public attention too powerfully, not to convince the proprietors of the winter theatres, that his assistance would be conducive to the interest of their respective houses. Advantageous proposals were therefore made to him, but his engagement at Bath prevented his closing immediately with them. His ambition prompted him to hasten the period of his treading the boards of Drury-Lane, and he offered to pay a forfeiture of five hundred pounds to the Bath managers, who refused to comply with his request, but at last agreed that one year of his engagement should be erased. This condescension, which gratified his most ardent wishes, enabled him in 1804 to repair to London, where, after a successful summer season at the Haymarket, during which his benefit at the King's Theatre drew such overflowing crowds, as to baffle the opposition of box-keepers and money-takers, and fill many of the seats gratis, he became the chief actor at Drury-Lane, in tragedy and comedy, having contracted an engagement for three years.

Here his genius revealed itself in all its splendour. Fed with continual applause, praised even by the most severe critics of the day, he did not rest indolently on the fame which he had obtained. In 1805, he even started from an actor's into an author's sphere, and wrote "*The Venetian Outlaw*," a play which was represented for many nights with general approbation. It was during this period, that *The Honey-Moon* made its first appearance.—In this excellent specimen of imitative genius, he filled, and continues to fill, the part of *Duke Aranza*, in which character he is represented in the portrait attending these Memoirs.

The *Honey-Moon* was accepted, with many other plays of equal merit, if the voice of report speaks truth, several years before they were acted. Their author, John Tobin, Esq. did not outlive the neglect or forgetfulness of the managers, and had reached the land where applause and hisses are alike indifferent, when his production roused general admiration for talents which then lay useless in the grave.

This play has no claim to novelty: the plot is partly taken from Shakspeare, and partly from Beaumont and Fletcher. Its chief excellence is its language; and yet it is frequently little more than a close imitation, not only of the words, but of the thoughts of our former writers. Numerous passages, however, are original; and the beauty, strength, and elegance of the expressions, the chaste wit couched in some, the sublimity of others, prove that the author was a real poet, who might have culled a wreath of unfading flowers on his own grounds, without plucking a wild blossom here and there, from the vales of ancient poetry. Firmness and penetration are the most conspicuous features in the *Duke*'s character. He falls in love with a painter's daughter, whose pride has been reared by flattery into insolent haughtiness. He seems to yield obediently to her overbearing temper, in order to gain her hand. Dazzled by the pomp with which he is surrounded, her ambition, rather than her love, leads her to sacrifice her liberty for a ducal crown, not a husband. But scarcely has she become his wife, than he takes her to a miserable cottage, assumes a peasant's dress, and informs her that she has reached her castle. Here, the coolness with which Elliston welcomes her home, forms a striking contrast with his preceding humility, and shews the first glimpse of his true disposition beginning to reveal itself. Miss Duncan's astonishment and apprehension, mixed with vexation, in the character of *Juliana*, on receiving this intelligence, suit exactly nature, when corrupted by pride, and disappointed in her warmest expectations. Indeed, this charming actress displays as much excellence in her part, as Elliston in his, and renders it impossible for any other female performer to surpass her in the delineation of a shrew, before and after her taming. His calm asseveration, his assumed simplicity, and yet the fleeting sarcastic expression, which steals, almost unconsciously, over his countenance, and can be seen only by those who are let into the secret of his plan, at the following passage—

"By Heav'n!
"This is the noble mansion that I spoke of."

can only be equalled by the characteristic petulancy and earnestness of her inquisitive answer:

"This!—you are are not in earnest, tho' you
"bear it
"With such a sober brow.—Come, come, you
"jest."

In the whole of this scene, his assumed indifference, which not a single look, a single gesture, a single accent of his voice betrays to be false; his sarcastic remarks, tempered with

kindness; his burst of manly feeling, when his wife asks whether he will not beat her; and his dignified explanation of the situation in which they are placed, and the line of conduct required to lead them to happiness, cannot be called *acting*, but *nature* itself.

In the scene when he tries to discover the secret sentiments and intentions of his wife, who feigns repentance, he assumes an air of conviction, whilst probing her to the quick, which disarms her vigilance. The seeming confidence with which he exclaims—

"I now see plainly you have found your wits,
"And are a sober, metamorphos'd woman.
"*Juliana.* I am, indeed.
"*Duke.* I know it; I can read you.—
"There is a true contrition in your looks:—
"Your's is no penitence in masquerade.—
"You are not playing on me?
* * * * * * *
"A dukedom!—pshaw—it is an idle thing."

His conscious penetration, and therefore the calm accent with which (after receiving her answer, "I have begun to think so.") he says aside, "That's a lie," prove the most correct judgment and feeling. But he surpasses himself in the scene when he pleads before his own servant, who, by his command, has assumed the dress and name of the *Duke Aranza*. Yielding to the force of natural habit, he enters his own apartment without being announced, and with the ease of a master; but when reproached with his impudence by the mock Duke, after exclaiming aside, "the rogue reproves me well!" he becomes so satirically humble, and displays so much dignity in his apology, so much judgment and good humour in his defence, so much pointed sarcasm in some of his remarks, such as—

"She might have seen the difference at a
"glance,
"Between your Grace, and such a man as I
"am!"

as ought to strike his wife with admiration, were not riches, pomp, and titles, still foremost in her estimation.

When they are returned to their cottage, and receive a visit from one of their neighbours, his unyielding patience, whilst trying her own, thus giving her an example of the virtue which he wishes her to acquire, and the mildness of his remonstrances, form a noble contrast with the untamed impetuosity of his lady. The looks of love, with which he gives her directions for her dress, and the frankness of the praises which he bestows upon her beauty, could not fail to produce, even in real life, the same effect as on the stage, and melt the anger of the most implacable woman. His gentlemanly familiarity, when mixing with the peasants in the dance; his good humour and secret joy when he is become in his turn the aim of his corrected wife's raillery; and, lastly, his dignity when he resumes his real rank, form pictures of nature, improved by art, which no other performer has yet been able to equal.

To point out Mr. Elliston's best characters, would be to give a list of almost all the chief parts in comedy and tragedy. Comedy, however, is the ground where his genius has cast the deepest roots, and flourishes in richest luxuriance. In *Leon*, in *Rule a Wife and have a Wife*, and in *The Three and the Deuce*, where he represents three brothers, this Proteus changes with the most astonishing rapidity. Now a pondering, dull, and hesitating being; he now rushes before us a wild, fencing, dancing, singing coxcomb; and, before *our* features have had time to resume the serious expression, of which his mad eccentricity has robbed them, he stalks before us a gaping idiot, leaping to catch flies, or wanting to play at marbles. This is the most finished performance of the kind that we have witnessed.

Not being favoured by nature with a noble countenance, like Mr. Kemble's, Mr. Elliston is by some deemed inferior, in tragedy, to this excellent actor. We do not think that his inferiority, in this line, and to Mr. Kemble only, proceeds solely from the less sublime cast of his features, but from the expansibility of his genius, which, instead of confining itself to certain passages, spreads over the whole of his part, and gives life and expression to the most indifferent word or sentiment. Thus the excellence which he displays is so general, that it defeats its own purposes. Were he to sink some passages into shade, to bring a flood of light upon others, he might perhaps really deserve *less*, but would meet with *more* approbation, from all those who wield the pen of criticism. His *Fitzharding*, in the *Curfew*, and his *Hamlet*, are his master-pieces. His expression of cunning and revenge in the former, and his dry and sarcastic humour in the latter, could not have been surpassed even by the abilities of a Kemble.

Unrivalled in comedy, Mr. Elliston now fills the second rank in tragedy; he has powers that may raise him to the first, and he would undoubtedly hold divided empire with Mr. Kemble, did he allow study and judgment to improve and regulate the unbounded powers of his genius.